

Yasha Klots (ed.)



Publishing Russian Literature
Across Borders

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**Tamizdat:
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PETER LANG

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Yasha Klots

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Tamizdat as a Practice and Institution (Introduction)

This volume originated in the international conference and book exhibition “Tamizdat: Publishing Russian Literature in the Cold War,” which took place at Hunter College of the City University of New York on December 10–11, 2018.¹ Like the conference, it seeks to define tamizdat as a literary practice and political institution that served as a foil to state-sanctioned publishing (gosizdat), on the one hand, and underground (re)production and circulation of manuscripts (samizdat), on the other. The volume challenges the traditional view of late Soviet culture as a dichotomy between the official and non-official spheres, in which samizdat and tamizdat have been represented as virtually inseparable, the latter often portrayed as a mere extension, if not a metonymy, of the former. *Tamizdat: Publishing Russian Literature Across Borders* explores tamizdat beyond its ostensibly innocuous etymology. It demonstrates, from a variety of perspectives, that tamizdat was as emblematic of Russian literature after Stalin as its more familiar and better researched domestic counterparts, samizdat and gosizdat, allowing us to look at late Soviet culture as a transnationally dynamic, three-dimensional model.

* * *

Comprising manuscripts rejected, censored or never submitted for publication at home but smuggled through various channels out of the country and published elsewhere with or without their authors’ knowledge or consent

1 The program of the conference and video recordings of all talks, presentations, and round table discussions are available at <https://www.reechunter.com/tamizdat-conference.html> (06/01/2021).

(often for the purpose of being sent back as ideologically subversive material), tamizdat contributed to the formation of the twentieth-century Russian literary canon: suffice it to say that the majority of contemporary Russian classics, with few exceptions, first appeared abroad long before they could see the light of day in Russia after perestroika. Tamizdat mediated the relationships of authors in Soviet Russia with the local literary establishment, on the one hand, and the nonconformist underground, on the other, while the very prospect of having their works published abroad, let alone the consequences of such a transgression, affected these authors' choices and ideological positions in regard to both fields.

Historically and terminologically, tamizdat is younger than samizdat, a neologism that goes back to Nikolai Glazkov's self-manufactured books of poetry from as early as the 1940s.² But while the term samizdat suggests that a hand-written or manually typed text circulates locally without official sanction among a relatively narrow circle of initiated readers, who continue to reproduce and disseminate it further, tamizdat presumes that a text is published – with all the official attributes of a printed edition – extraterritorially, after it crosses the border of its country of origin. A tamizdat text thus enters a foreign literary jurisdiction, where it assumes a new life (at least until it makes it back home in printed form). Narrowly defined, tamizdat stands for texts that have crossed the same border twice: on the way out as a manuscript, and on the way back in as a publication. The vicissitudes of these texts' travels across national borders varied, as did the constellation of actors involved.

Depending on the individual circumstances of each text, its roundtrip journey abroad and back home, from manuscript to a print edition, involved the author, whose name may or may not have been listed on the cover and title pages, and whether or not the publication was authorized; the courier(s)

2 Typed by the author on his own typewriter, the title pages of these handmade editions were marked *samsebiaizdat* ("self-publishing") to mock the standard abbreviations of "Gosizdat," "Goslitizdat" and so on, which appeared invariably on officially sanctioned publications in Soviet Russia. Glazkov's last appearance in the underground took place in 1959, when he contributed five poems to Aleksandr Ginzburg's samizdat almanac *Sintaksis* (No. 1), first published abroad in *Grani* 58 (1965), 95–193.

who smuggled the manuscript abroad, whether manually or via diplomatic pouch, with or without the help of the author's local friends or foreign diplomats with mail privileges; the editor(s) who received the manuscript once it had crossed the border and prepared it for publication in their own or someone else's press or periodical; the critics, including Russian émigrés, western Slavists, scholars and journalists, and the readers abroad who happened to be the first audience of the text in question; another courier, often an exchange scholar, a graduate student, a diplomat, or a journalist, who smuggled the printed edition back to the Soviet Union via embassy channels or otherwise, with or without a fee for the author; and finally, the reader back home, who may or may not have been already familiar with the publication through samizdat (or even from an earlier publication in gosizdat).

Tamizdat thus combined elements of both the official and unofficial fields of late Soviet culture insofar as it attached a legal status to a manuscript that had been deemed illegal or refused official circulation at home. Although the etymology of tamizdat may appear quite innocent, simply referring to a place of publication that lies elsewhere in relation to where the work was created, the political function of tamizdat was fully realized only when the text reunited with its author and readers back home, thus completing the cycle. It is this dimension of tamizdat that makes it a true barometer of the political climate during the Cold War. Depending on the author's standing with the authorities, the ideological profile and repertoire of the publisher and its sources of funding, the international atmosphere in general and the relationships between the two countries in particular, tamizdat could incriminate the author of a runaway manuscript to an even greater extent than had the same manuscript not been leaked abroad and remained confined to the domestic field of samizdat. Operating from opposite sides of the border, samizdat and tamizdat amplified one another and, at end of the day, were bound to fuse into an ever more potent alternative for nonconformist Russian literature to find its way to the reader, albeit in a roundabout way.

Tamizdat's distinctive feature, however, remains geographical rather than political, since the very climate of the Cold War blurred the line between the "political" and "artistic" almost irreparably. Likewise, drawing a line between the official and underground literary fields, including samizdat and tamizdat, on the basis of aesthetic merit or "quality" hardly appears

productive today, much as it might have been tempting decades earlier, when Dmitry Pospelovsky, the author of one of the earliest articles on tamizdat, claimed that “samizdat and tamizdat includes the greatest writers and poets – both living and dead – of the Soviet era, while the bulk of the contemporary gosizdat output is grey mediocrity at best” (Pospelovsky 1978: 44–45).³ Such a politically driven approach, understandable at the time, is clearly short-sighted if only because the same authors could publish in both gosizdat and tamizdat, the former rarely precluding the latter, but not vice versa. Tamizdat was never limited to samizdat manuscripts alone, which were of course its main fuel: it often reprinted works that had passed Soviet censorship and appeared in gosizdat, as was the case, most notably, with Solzhenitsyn’s *Odin’ den’ Ivana Denisovicha* (*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*), Vladimir Dudintsev’s *Ne khlebom edinyim* (*Not by Bread Alone*), Mikhail Bulgakov’s *Master i Margarita* (*The Master and Margarita*), to name but a few.⁴

Although for the readers in Russia the author’s physical whereabouts were hardly a definitive factor (what mattered was that the edition itself came from abroad), geography sets tamizdat apart from émigré literature, which was both written *and* published abroad, within a single geopolitical field. This terminological problem persisted, however, long after tamizdat became a reality. For example, Gleb Struve defined tamizdat as “émigré books by non-émigré writers” (Struve 1971: viii; emphasis in the original) as late as 1971, highlighting the Russian emigration’s role in channeling contraband manuscripts from the Soviet Union but avoiding the term already widespread among “non-émigré” authors in Russia. Pospelovsky’s broad definition of tamizdat in the late 1970s, on the other hand, includes works “written by Rus-

3 By contrast to Pospelovsky’s dated approach, see Kind-Kovács/Labov 2013: 1–23.

4 Two pirated Russian editions of Solzhenitsyn’s novella were brought out by Flegon Press in London months after its sensational publication in the Soviet journal *Novyi Mir* in November 1962 (the latter Flegon edition was a mere photostat of the Soviet one). Dudintsev’s and Bulgakov’s novels also came out abroad soon after they appeared in gosizdat. *Not by Bread Alone*, first published in *Novyi Mir* in 1956 and then as a separate book in 1957, was reprinted the same year by two different tamizdat publishers (Munich: TSOPE, 1957; New York: Novoe russkoe slovo, 1957). *The Master and Margarita*, first serialized in a censored form in the Soviet journal *Moskva* (No. 11, 1966, and No. 1, 1967), appeared abroad a year later (Paris: YMCA-Press, 1967).

sian émigrés” (Pospelovsky 1978: 44). Although the vast majority of Russian émigré publishers and critics were poets and prose writers in their own right, their roles in publishing authors from behind the Iron Curtain should, it appears, be regarded as separate from their original contributions to Russian literature as writers and poets. Nabokov’s fiction, along these lines, may have been as forbidden a fruit in Soviet Russia as Pasternak’s *Doctor Zhivago*, but the reason the latter is tamizdat and the former is not has less to do with the subject matter of the two writers’ works (deceptively apolitical in Nabokov’s case, and more poignant in Pasternak’s) than with their geographical whereabouts vis-à-vis their publishers and readers.⁵

Although historically and etymologically related, samizdat and tamizdat were, in a sense, the mirror opposites of each other. Apart from the obvious differences in their techniques for reproducing and circulating texts (handmade vs. industrially published; distributed illegally to a limited underground audience vs. readily available “aboveground” in bookshops and libraries), what seems to set them apart is their respective readerships. True, both samizdat and tamizdat “offered authors two legitimate routes to audiences” (Kind-Kovács 2014: 9), yet the audiences themselves, especially during the formative years of tamizdat, sometimes appeared geographically and culturally perhaps as divided as authors in Russia and their publishers, critics and readers abroad. A telling example is Akhmatova’s *Requiem*, whose epigraph –

Нет, и не под чуждым небосводом,
И не под защитой чуждых крыл –
Я была тогда с моим народом,
Там, где мой народ, к несчастью, был.
(Akhmatova 1963: 7)

No, not under foreign skies,
Nor under the protection of foreign wings –

5 For the sake of consistency, when an author emigrated – like Brodsky in 1972, Siniaevsky in 1973, or Solzhenitsyn in 1974 – it is only their publications abroad *before* emigration, not after, that should be considered tamizdat.

I was then with my people,
There, where my people, unfortunately, were.

– articulates the void that came between the “two Russias” after the Revolution, as well as the author’s unequivocal position vis-à-vis those who found themselves elsewhere geographically, ideologically and stylistically as a result. So much so that authors in Soviet Russia were often viewed by their émigré peers, especially of the older generations, not only as allies in their fight against the Soviet regime, but also as ideological opponents. It was their life experiences and, more importantly, their means of registering Soviet reality in their texts that often provoked suspicion and misunderstanding on the opposite side of the Iron Curtain. Over time, as tamizdat was gradually rejuvenated by new arrivals from the Soviet Union, these differences would fade, yet they never disappeared entirely. But until the Third Wave of Russian emigration took over tamizdat in the early 1970s, the temperature in the relationships between publishers, critics and readers in the West and the authors in Russia was often quite hot.

The lack of direct communication between authors and publishers across state borders could not but provoke letters of protest and public renunciations of tamizdat publications, whether or not such letters in Soviet newspapers were genuine, forced, or only “suggested.”⁶ Indeed, especially in the early years of tamizdat, few authors were happy with how their manuscripts were handled abroad. Their frustration was caused not only by textual flaws, including the plain typos with which tamizdat (as well as samizdat) was infested, but also by the shortsighted reception of their works in western media, and in particular in the émigré press (to say nothing of the reluctance or inability of most tamizdat publishers to pay authors royalties or fees). Much depended on the author’s current status in Russia which, crudely put, ranged from official to semi-official to underground.

6 For example, in 1972, the letters of protest against publications in tamizdat published in *Literaturnaia gazeta* alone included those of Bulat Okudzhava and Anatoly Gladilin (both on November 29, 1972), Arkady and Boris Strugatsky (on December 13, 1972) and Varlam Shalamov (on February 23, 1972).

To repeat, tamizdat was never limited to dissident writers. The same author could be in the vanguard of gosizdat before falling out of favor and being forced into the underground, like Solzhenitsyn; the author may have been active as an official and even high-ranking Soviet critic but not as a prose writer, as was the case with Lydia Chukovskaya and Andrei Siniavsky (until his second identity as Abram Tertz was exposed); the same author may have been able to publish lyrical verse in the official Soviet press, but not works on less innocent subjects, such as Akhmatova's *Poema bez geroia* (*Poem without a Hero*) and *Requiem*. The conventional distinction between official and non-official is hardly applicable to tamizdat given its inherently dual nature that combined both.

Unsurprisingly, tamizdat jeopardized or altogether aborted one's chances of getting published in gosizdat, but it could also cast a shadow on authors' reputations among their like-minded nonconformist audience in the underground, especially when political changes raised hopes that the grip of censorship would abate, as was indeed the case during the Thaw, especially after the Twenty-Second Party Congress. One might go so far as to say that, at least in the early 1960s, samizdat and tamizdat derived from a different ethos: while releasing one's manuscript to samizdat and circulating it locally in the underground was considered an act of civic solidarity, courage and even heroism, letting it be leaked abroad and (not) seeing it published in tamizdat could be viewed as disgrace or even a betrayal of one's civic duty as a writer and citizen. Far from being a rule, and perhaps even an exception, when Akhmatova showed a copy of her *Requiem*, newly published in Munich, to Chukovskaya, her reaction was more than ambivalent: "Here is enough shame for us," Chukovskaya wrote that day, "that the great 'Requiem' rang out in the West before it did so at home."⁷

Whether anonymous, pseudonymous, or published under the author's real name, tamizdat included works written a long time ago by authors who were no longer alive (e.g., the poets of the Silver Age), or works produced more

7 "Довольно с нас и того позора, что великий 'Реквием' прозвучал на Западе раньше, чем дома" (Chukovskaia 1997: 3, 131; diary entry for December 28, 1963). Sure enough, Chukovskaya own novella *Sofia Petrovna*, which shares much of the subject matter and setting with *Requiem*, was also published in tamizdat two years later, despite her efforts to have it published in Russia first.

recently by writers who were still around to face the likely consequences of such a transgression. Although direct punishment for publishing abroad was not always guaranteed, and the extent of the punishment, if any, varied from light reprimand to years of hard labor, the painful memory of the *Doctor Zhivago* affair affected authors' choices as they dared to consider, let alone pursue, the opportunity offered them overtly or indirectly by tamizdat, or when they simply found out that their works had appeared abroad "without their knowledge or consent" (this standard disclaimer was widely used by tamizdat publishers to protect authors from the authorities).⁸ When Akhmatova's *Poem without a Hero* was first published in New York in 1960, three years before *Requiem*, the sensational news promptly invited a flashback to Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*: "Out of fear I could hardly grasp the meaning of Anna Andreevna's words. [...] It means, everything is again as with 'Zhivago' [...]. Anna Andreevna is anxious, but somehow not too much. She must be hoping that the story with 'Zhivago' will not be repeated."⁹ Indeed, as Chukovskaya also noted in the same diary entry, on February 20, 1960, "the times are special now, you cannot predict anything in advance."¹⁰

A joint venture of the Russian emigration and western institutions, tamizdat remained firmly inscribed in Soviet literary history until the Iron Curtain was lifted and the Soviet Union collapsed. Tamizdat's political mission was then made obsolete. Having lost much of its politically oriented readership, tamizdat has gone down in history, prompting the writer Zinovy Zinik to claim that it is only now, beyond the political context, that the genuine literary motifs of exile and emigration – and, by extension, of tamizdat – have started floating to the surface (Zinik 2011: 256). There is, however, another reason to look back at tamizdat: today, thirty years after the Cold War's end, we are witnessing a resurgence of its rhetoric and, worse, reenactments of

8 Other precautions, however (in)effective, included signing the publisher's prefaces, introductions and afterwords with a pseudonym. On the pseudonyms of the Russian emigration, see Shruba/Korostelev 2016.

9 "От испуга я едва понимала смысл произносимых Анной Андреевной слов. [...] Значит, опять все как с 'Живаго' [...]. Анна Андреевна встревожена, но как-то не слишком. По-видимому, надеется, что повторения истории с 'Живаго' не будет" (Chukovskaia 1997: 2, 371).

10 "Время сейчас особенное, вперед не угадаешь" (ibid.).

some of its most austere policies on both the international and local scales (not only in Putin's Russia, but also across the U.S. and Europe).

The post-Soviet "thaw" of the 1990s, as it may now be called, made tamizdat obsolete not only politically but also technologically. It introduced an entirely new path for clandestine texts to "go live," bypassing not only state censorship, but also geographical borders, however open they may have been by the 1990s. From then on, geography and space itself seem to have hardly mattered as they have become virtual, while the time previously required by a typical tamizdat operation has also shrunk to just a few clicks. Yet while in the early days of the Internet "cyberspace seemed to be free and open" (the ultimate freedom of speech incarnate), today, as Robert Darnton has also pointed out, "it is being fought over, divided up, and closed off behind protective barriers" (Darnton 2014: 13), suggesting an eerie (re)turn to the geopolitical realities of the Cold War, when the world was divided. In case we have forgotten, tamizdat serves as a reminder that "the power of print could be as threatening as cyberwarfare" (ibid.). In fact, it was more threatening.

* * *

The papers and talks published below complicate, expand, and otherwise challenge the above definition of tamizdat from a variety of perspectives. Focusing on the "spatial turn" as a theoretical premise and a driving force of tamizdat, **Olga Matich** uses the examples of Abram Tertz (aka Andrei Siniavsky), Vasily Aksenov, Sasha Sokolov, and the anthology *Metropole*, to introduce the concept of "textual embodiment," which, she argues, allowed these and other authors to transgress the panopticon of the Soviet literary establishment "textually" before doing so "physically," when they emigrated. The approach is not limited, however, to authors who eventually followed in their runaway manuscripts' footsteps: the term "textual embodiment" is equally applicable to those who published in tamizdat but stayed in the Soviet Union. Looking at diasporic writing through the lens of defamiliarization (*ostranenie*), Matich points to "geographic back and forth movement" as one of tamizdat's inherent features: "the Russian texts clandestinely sent *there* for publication because they were unpublishable *here* migrated back home (*here*) since that was where most of their readers were located." Laying bare the spatial ambiguity of the opposition between "here" and "there," Matich's

article, moreover, projects it onto the axis of the time that elapsed “between sending manuscripts abroad, publishing them there, and their returning to the Russian reader.”

Based on archival findings, **Polina Barskova**’s article confronts tamizdat from an angle that is both historically and linguistically unusual. It reveals the peculiar generic cross-pollination that informed Harrison Salisbury’s celebrated book on the Siege of Leningrad *The 900 Days*. Although the book was first published in English in 1969, it was many years in the making, including the author’s visit to Leningrad in 1944, soon after the Siege was lifted, as a foreign correspondent stationed in Moscow. Going over the sources available to Salisbury then and later, Barskova dwells in particular on two first-hand accounts by Siege survivors that the American author relied on. First, she illustrates how *The 900 Days* not just drew on, but incorporated entire paragraphs of Anatoly Darov’s novel *Blokada (The Siege)*, especially those parts of it that yielded information tabooed in the Soviet press. Second, Barskova examines the unpublished notes of Igor’ Diakonov, found in Salisbury’s archive. “A new text thus emerges,” Barskova writes, “a palimpsest in which Diakonov reconstructs his own version of events in response to Salisbury’s multi-character panorama, inscribing it in and over Salisbury’s text.” As a result of Salisbury’s double dialogue with Darov in the United States and with Diakonov across Soviet state borders, tamizdat, in the broad sense, reveals a “peculiar ability to fill in the gaps of historical knowledge while also generating new controversies and misunderstandings, and thus widening the field of historical interpretation.”

Yasha Klots reconstructs the history of the first publication and reception of another work of historical fiction, whose subject matter and setting also predate tamizdat as a literary practice and political institution of the late Soviet era: Lydia Chukovskaya’s novella *Spusk pod vodu (Going Under)*. Set and written in 1949, but first published abroad in 1972, *Going Under* was largely eclipsed by *Sofia Petrovna* (1939–1940), Chukovskaya’s earlier work, which is known to be the only prose account of the Great Terror written not in hindsight, but almost synchronously with the events described. Neither work, Klots argues, can be reduced to its historical setting and subject matter, however. Instead, they appear indexical to each other and form a cycle, or diptych, precisely as works of literature rather than historical accounts.

Through a parallel close reading of *Sofia Petrovna* and *Going Under*, Klots unearths some of the mainstream literary paradigms on both sides of the Iron Curtain during the 1960s and 1970s, uncomfortably juxtaposing tamizdat with gosizdat, including its method of socialist realism, which serves as Chukovskaya's point of departure.

For all the historical and political import of Solzhenitsyn's magnum opus *Arkhipelag Gulag* (*The Gulag Archipelago*), it is the material qualities of its tamizdat editions, rather than their groundbreaking content, that **Alexander Jacobson** proposes looking at, redefining tamizdat not as a type of text but as "a certain type of book." Indeed, while all four editions of *The Gulag Archipelago* analyzed in Jacobson's study featured the same text, they did so in different ways, pursuing different goals and targeting different audiences (émigré and western readers vs. Soviet reader). By focusing on such publishing techniques as miniaturization (employed by YMCA Press) and false imprints (used by Flegon), Jacobson argues that while émigré and Soviet readerships consumed one and the same text, "they did so via radically different objects." Consequently, Jacobson defines tamizdat as a "masquerade," a social practice that highlights "the radical separation between the appearance of these books and the nature of their contents." It appears, however, that the need for masquerading tamizdat, and the extent to which clandestine texts had to be masqueraded, still depended on how explosive their subject matter was historically, ideologically, and even stylistically. Indeed, one could hardly choose a better example than Solzhenitsyn's *The Gulag Archipelago*.

Tamizdat has a prehistory that goes back to the nineteenth century, in particular to Alexander Herzen's London-based Free Russian Press and his famous monthly *Kolokol* (*The Bell*). But as a literary practice and political institution of the late Soviet era, tamizdat began with the publication of Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* in 1957 in Italy. **Giuseppina Larocca** explores the Italian publishing scene, focusing on the Milan publisher Jaca Book, whose role in publicizing contraband Russian literature from the Soviet Union has been largely eclipsed by Pasternak's publisher Feltrinelli, as well as by other more famous Italian publishing ventures.

Ilja Kukuj writes about a non-publication. Reconstructing the history of the samizdat almanac *Fioretti* compiled in Leningrad in 1965, he dwells on several factors, both personal and historical, that prevented the almanac

from being published abroad until much later, after tamizdat as a practice and institution of the late Soviet era had long become history. (*Fioretti* was first brought out in Philadelphia only in 2017.) The question that follows from Kukuj's study is whether the definition of tamizdat should be limited to publications that actually took place, or whether it should also include manuscripts that for various reasons never made it into print. Certainly, not every text that was smuggled abroad was published, and there are still many of them in the archives worldwide. Still, does their publication today, in an entirely different historical and technological era, count as tamizdat? And how does it change our understanding of tamizdat as a historical phenomenon?

Mark Lipovetsky explores tamizdat's repercussions in the post-Soviet period, focusing on the catalogue and inner workings of Carl and Ellendea Proffer's now-legendary publishing house Ardis, which celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 2021. "The lion's share of so-called returned literature during perestroika," Lipovetsky points out, "consisted of reprints of Ardis books in leading Soviet thick journals, who frequently failed to identify their source." As it happens, thanks to Ardis (and tamizdat more broadly), an alternative literary canon took shape abroad during the seventies and eighties, becoming a vital undercurrent of Russian literature after 1991. Lipovetsky's article tackles tamizdat's "afterlife" by sketching its long-term impact on Russian writing under new historical circumstances, when the question of "two Russian literatures," first raised by the First Wave of Russian emigration in the 1920s, was finally reformulated.

In his historical reconstruction of the series of circumstances and interactions that led to the publication of *Doctor Zhivago* in 1957, **Paolo Mancosu** takes us back not just to that historical point of departure for tamizdat, but in fact ten years earlier. His investigation traces the communications between Pasternak and Desmond Patrick Costello, a figure who has thus far escaped the attention of Pasternak scholars – despite the fact, unearthed by Mancosu, that Costello smuggled out an early version of Pasternak's famous novel to Oxford as early as 1948. That year, Costello also published *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*, for which Pasternak was consulted and which, according to Lazar Fleishman, may be regarded as a source for tamizdat in the years to follow.

The last part of the volume, “First-Hand Accounts,” opens with two memoirs by **Lewis S. Feuer** and **Robin Feuer Miller**, both of which speak to the underrated role of couriers and smugglers, exchange scholars, diplomats, and other actors involved in the business of publishing contraband Russian literature from the USSR in the West during the Cold War. Both memoirs tell the story of Kathryn Beliveau Feuer (1926–1992), Lewis’s wife and Robin’s mother, who smuggled Akhmatova’s *Requiem* to Berkeley, California, in the spring of 1963, after which it was first published by Gleb Struve in Munich six months later. The other protagonist in Lewis’s and Robin’s accounts is Yulian Oksman, a Soviet literary scholar whom Kathryn met as an American graduate student in Moscow and who paid dearly for his interactions with foreigners, including the Feuers and Struve. Written from the perspective of nearly thirty years, both memoirists rely not only on their memory of those days, but also on their personal diaries, which they kept independently and unbeknownst to each other throughout their stay in Moscow in 1963. “The gap between present memory and past daily transcriptions disturbs me,” Robin Feuer Miller confessed in 1992, “to say nothing of the even more profound gaps between my father’s memories and my own, discrepancies, despite our great closeness, about basic facts.” The story of Kathryn’s and her then fifteen-year-old daughter Robin’s journey back to the United States from Moscow via Leningrad, Helsinki, and Stockholm offers a rare insight into the physical, psychological, and legal vicissitudes that tamizdat could entail.

The talks by **Michael Scammell** and **Pavel Litvinov** complement one another in a different way. Both focus on the dissemination and publication of political tamizdat, but while Litvinov’s perspective is that of a dissident speaking from his experience first in Russia and then in New York, Scammell’s account is that of a foreigner who orchestrated the publication of some of the most important human rights documents, including Litvinov’s, in his London-based journal *Index on Censorship*. According to Litvinov, the role of political and human rights tamizdat was, among other things, to offer “protection” to the authors, readers, publishers, and distributors of uncensored literature. But political tamizdat was not limited to this literary mission, of course. Using the example of Valery Chalidze’s Khronika Press, Litvinov describes receiving barely legible scraps of paper smuggled out from Soviet hard-labor camps, deciphering and publishing them in New York. Unlike

literature, whose artistic specificity is largely prefigured by the language in which it is written and the culture that shapes it more broadly, human rights publications are, in a sense, more united and global insofar as they register and give voice to human suffering and political persecution as an essentially universal experience regardless of geography. Perhaps this is why *Index on Censorship* published political samizdat from the Soviet Union alongside “samizdat” from South America, Asia, Africa, Greece, Portugal, Spain, and so on, even if the Russian neologism did not apply to the realities of those countries: “we placed samizdat and tamizdat in a global context,” Scammell explains, “and that gained us a different and broader audience.” Litvinov goes so far as to describe the *Chronicle of Human Rights in the USSR*, published by Khronika Press, as “apolitical”: “Basically, it was a publication about political persecution of people who spoke their minds, no matter whether they were on the left or right. [...] Everyone was defended, because in the name of the human rights, everybody was *supposed* to be defended.”

The volume concludes with the keynote lecture by **Ellendea Proffer-Teasley**, co-founder of Ardis Publishers, who translates the effects of censorship, including self-censorship, back into the sphere of art and literature. Telling the story of Ardis from its inception to perestroika and beyond, Proffer-Teasley also uses the perspective of half a century to speak not only about the Soviet past, but also about the global present, enabling us to feel the resonance of tamizdat in a new millennium.

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Note on transliteration

The main text of this volume follows a modified Library of Congress (LoC) transliteration system. To make it more readable, first and last names ending in -ii have been changed to -y, such as Grigory Svirsky rather than Grigorii Svirskii. For the same sake the -ia endings collapsed to -ia (Evgenia), and the -aia endings were changed to -aya (Bukovskaya). Names beginning with Ia- or Iu- , such as Iurii and Iupp, have been changed to Yury and Yupp. Names are given in their standard English form when one exists (Joseph Brodsky). Bibliographic references follow the standard LoC transliteration system without diacritics. The names in the Index at the end of the volume are given as mentioned in the body of the main text or, if mentioned only in the references, in the standard LoC form.

Part I

Articles

Olga Matich

Tamizdat: The Spatial Turn, Textual Embodiment, My Personal Stories

Abstract: My essay is premised on the “spatial turn” in social and humanities theory in the 1970s and 1980s, spearheaded by Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, and Michel de Certeau, that reversed the traditional privileging of time over space, producing a spatialization of time. It also engages Foucault’s concern with surveillance and his spatial metaphor of the panopticon. Examining tamizdat, the brief study focuses on the illegal border crossings of literary texts as defined by the spatial relationship between *here* (Soviet Union) and *there* (beyond Soviet borders) which involved in-between movement in both directions, as well as a relationship between gosizdat and tamizdat. I pay close attention especially to Andrei Siniavsky’s literary double Abram Tertz, who represented his textual body, which crossed the panoptic Soviet border into unbounded space *there* and prison *here*. The other two primary authors are Sasha Sokolov (*A School for Fools*, 1976) and Vasily Aksenov as the driving force of *Metropole* (1979), a unique collective project. All three represented very different instantiations of tamizdat. Besides geographic in-betweenness, my discussion, especially of Tertz’s and Sokolov’s writing, examines their literary experiments with spatialized prose as well as their role in the emergence of Russian postmodernism.

Keywords: Spatial turn, boundary crossing, Andrei Siniavsky / Abram Tertz, Sasha Sokolov, Vasily Aksenov

Spearheaded by Henri Lefebvre, Michel Foucault, and Michel de Certeau, the spatial turn starting in the 1970s came to represent a paradigm shift in social and humanities theory that dispersed the traditional privileging of time over space. In a 1967 lecture titled “Des Espace Autres” (“Of Other Spaces”), published only in 1984, Foucault proclaimed that “we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects

points and intersects with its own skein” (Foucault 1986: 22). The term *spatial turn*, however, was introduced by Edward Soja in *Postmodern Geographies* only in 1989. It has come to inform diaspora and migration studies, especially regarding questions of boundary crossings, mobility, distancing, questions of space and place, as well as memory. Myria Georgiou, a professor of migration studies, writes that space is “a central category in relation to identity and representation in the context of diaspora and migration” (Georgiou 2010: 20).

Linked to various forms of mobility, mapping, and globalization, the spatial turn has become an important category in the study of deterritorialization, here meaning the severance of social, political, or cultural practices from their places of origin, and reterritorialization in a new space (diaspora) associated with the literal displacement of people.¹ As migration and boundary crossing, it has been applied to colonialism in postcolonial cultural criticism. Influenced by Foucault, Edward Said wrote about what he called imaginative geographies and the spatial construction of cultural identity and discourse. Although the above French theorists’ conceptualization of space, its relation to power and surveillance concerned bourgeois societies and cultures, I propose to apply the spatial turn to the deterritorialized tamizdat publishing that prefigured the emigration of many Soviet writers to the west in the 1970s and 1980s, resulting in expatriation. Just like theories, Soviet texts traveled in geographic space, rearticulating or reshaping the closed nature of Soviet publishing.

For Foucault and de Certeau, space was fundamental to the exercise of power and surveillance. Policed by Soviet authorities, tamizdat may also be considered in relation to Foucault’s well-known concept of the disciplinary panopticon, which he defined as perpetual surveillance through spatial ordering. Representing a spatial turn in Soviet publishing during the second half of the twentieth century and subject to surveillance, tamizdat was characterized by geographic back and forth movement, which Foucault articulated as the *near* and *far*: the Russian texts clandestinely sent *there* for publication because they were unpublishable *here* migrated back home (*here*)

1 Deterritorialization and reterritorialization in capitalism have been discussed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, e.g., in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), with the latter focusing on spatial thinking.

since that was where most of their readers were located. The here/there opposition was spatially ambiguous, in other words. Tamizdat also included texts of older and dead writers published abroad, for example, Andrei Platonov's *Kotlovan (Foundation Pit)* was published in *Grani* (1969), a journal of the émigré political organization NTS,² published by Posev, and in book form by Ardis (1973),³ and thus made its way back into the Soviet Union.

Ardis Press, founded by Carl and Ellendea Proffer in Ann Arbor, Michigan, in 1971, became the main tamizdat publisher of Russian literature. The other was Posev in Germany, which had established channels for sending their publications back to the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. Right after Khrushchev's 1956 destalinization speech, *Grani* issued a proclamation to Soviet Russian writers, artists, and scholars who could not publish in *gosizdat* (government publishing), asking them to send their works abroad to Posev for publication, promising to keep their names secret.⁴ Historically, the proclamation may be considered the beginning of tamizdat. As for funding, Posev's publications were supported primarily by the CIA.

Because the illegal journey that the texts took in both directions involved perilous border crossings, other forms of sending manuscripts abroad were frequently used, especially the diplomatic mail services of foreign embassies, which were not subject to Soviet panoptic control.⁵ The spatial *there* often began, so to speak, as a foreign *here*, fusing the near and far by transforming them into a peculiar Cold War side by side, which might be identified as another kind of in-betweenness.

Tamizdat, a Cold War phenomenon, was initiated by Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago*, first published in Italian in 1957 (in Russian in 1958), and Abram

2 The Narodno-trudovoi soiuz (NTS, or National Labor Alliance) was originally an old émigré anti-Communist youth organization established in 1929 and premised on solidarism – interclass solidarity and compromise rather than extremism. After the Second World War, the NTS attracted many second-wave émigrés, and in the late seventies and eighties, some members of the third wave.

3 Joseph Brodsky, who left the Soviet Union in 1972, wrote the introduction to *Foundation Pit*.

4 Among other Soviet writers, Posev published Bella Akhmadulina, Aleksandr Galich, Bulat Okudzhava, and Vladimir Voinovich.

5 The Austrian embassy was especially open to letting their mail to be used for sending tamizdat manuscripts.

Tertz's *Chto takoe sotsialisticheskii realism* (*On Socialist Realism*), written in 1957, which appeared in the French New Left journal *Esprit* in 1959.⁶ Andrei Siniavsky had specifically asked Hélène Peltier, daughter of a French naval attaché with whom he became friends at Moscow State University, not to offer the essay to an anti-Soviet publication.⁷ Tamizdat, in other words, was launched by foreign translations, underscoring *the power of the foreign* there for which many contemporary members of the Soviet intelligentsia longed. We must also keep in mind that tamizdat had the function of converting symbolic capital into economic capital for those authors whose texts became popular and transnational, which was certainly the case with *Doctor Zhivago*.⁸ Another important dimension of tamizdat is exemplified by the fact that Pasternak's novel was first offered to gosizdat, unlike Siniavsky, who kept his connection to the works of Tertz a deep secret.⁹

Needless to say, tamizdat was contingent on panoptic detection, generating something like a detective story, "woven" and "interwoven" in part by the Soviet secret police, sometimes by the CIA, who performed the role of detectives. Remarkably, Siniavsky evaded KGB detection for six long years. Among the theories regarding Tertz's identity was that he was a White Russian émigré writing abroad! And among the suppositions regarding this "detective novel" was that the CIA informed the KGB of Tertz's real-life identity in exchange for information about Soviet submarines, an explanation for his arrest that Siniavsky himself believed. Here is what Tertz wrote about detection in the camps (the text would become known as *Golos iz khora* (*A Voice from the Chorus*) and was published later in emigration): "When life itself hangs by a grain of wheat, the account of how it actually germinates

6 Its first Russian edition appeared only in 1967.

7 Hélène Peltier-Zamoyska went on to become a well-known Slavist.

8 Unlike Siniavsky, Pasternak had lived in Europe as a young man. Interestingly, Peltier was one of the tamizdat go-betweens for both writers. Siniavsky dispatched his novella *Sud idet* (*The Trial Begins*) via Peltier the same year that *Doctor Zhivago* was sent abroad, in 1956.

9 The same was true of Yuly Daniel' aka Nikolai Arzhak, the second member of the duo of Siniavsky and Daniel' that was put on trial in 1966.

and sprouts out of the soil has all the suspense of a detective novel” (Tertz 1995: 24).¹⁰

It is also important to remember that tamizdat was not a postwar invention. Foregrounding spatiality – the term *tamizdat* comes from the 1950s – the political practice of publishing abroad instead of at home in Russia began in the nineteenth century with Alexander Herzen’s and Nikolai Ogarev’s revolutionary newspaper *Kolokol* (*The Bell*).¹¹ In the first half of the 1920s, that is, during NEP (New Economic Policy), writers who published their work abroad in deterritorialized émigré presses, especially in Berlin, were not persecuted, but that changed at the decade’s end with the rise of Stalinism.¹² A precedent for post-Stalin tamizdat was Zamiatin’s *My* (*We*), first published in English in 1924. Notably, it offers the first dystopian representation of Jeremy Bentham’s panopticon as an urban ideal of living space in which glass is the medium of surveillance. An abridged Russian edition of *We*, translated from the Czech (!), appeared in the Prague Socialist Revolutionary journal *Volia Rossii* in 1927. Zamiatin emigrated in 1931, but the original complete version of *We* was published by Chekhov Publishing House only in 1952, that is, after his death. Why it took so long remains a mystery to me, but such were the inexplicable circuitous routes of tamizdat. Geographically, one of the important contingencies of tamizdat had to do with the return of the “traveling text” home from where it was originally published. *We* was first published in the Soviet Union in 1988.

Andrei Bely’s shorter version of *Peterburg* (*Petersburg*, 1913), Russia’s principal modernist novel, was a different kind of traveling text. Produced and published in 1922 in Berlin, where Bely was living during the early twenties, this shorter edition is considered by many to be the novel’s more important version. Since it was printed by the Berlin branch of the Petrograd publishing house Epokha, it was available to the Russian reader as well. After Bely’s return to the Soviet Union, it was republished there (gosizdat) in 1928, this time

10 “Когда на хлебное зернышко, как на карту, поставлена жизнь, произрастание несчастного злака достигнет остроты детектива...” (Terts 1974: 28).

11 In 1855, Herzen began publishing his first tamizdat periodical, the almanac *Poliarnaiia zvezda* (*Polar Star*).

12 An example was Boris Pilniak’s *Krasnoe derevo* (*Mahogany*, 1929), which was banned in the Soviet Union.

with additional excisions for political, not literary reasons. Viktor Shklovsky, who also lived in Berlin at the time, wrote and published *ZOO, ili Pis'ma ne o liubvi* (*Zoo, or Letters Not about Love*) there with Helicon in 1923. However, an expanded uncensored version of *Zoo* was published soon afterward in Leningrad (1924).¹³ In other words, tamizdat and the spatial here-and-there have a long complex history, reflecting the multiplicity of spatial turns in Russian/Soviet publishing.

Turning to the old emigration, a primary political function of its culturally and politically active members, as they perceived their role, was the preservation of true Russian culture in exile, a stance that was first articulated by Nina Berberova in "Liricheskaia poema" ("Lyrical Poem", 1924–1926): "Ia ne v izgnan'i – ia v poslan'i" ("I am not in exile – I am on a mission") (Berberova 1927: 230).¹⁴ Meaning that the old émigré intelligentsia had the mandate not only to preserve but also to develop what it considered "true" Russian culture in diasporic space. The much later memoirs of Roman Gul', editor of the influential *Novyi zhurnal* (*The New Review*), *Ia unes Rossiui: apologiia emigratsii* (*I Took Russia with Me: An Apologia of Emigration*, 1981), represent the Russian émigré as the inhabitant of a deterritorialized Russia, located in the reterritorialized abroad.¹⁵

The gosizdat literary panopticon of the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras resulted in the creation of new forms of publishing that transgressed Soviet censorship: writers resorted to samizdat (self-publishing) or tamizdat, publishing beyond Soviet borders in an alien and, for most authors, unfamiliar geographic space, or to both samizdat and tamizdat. It was certainly an unusual form of deterritorialization, often resulting in writers following their texts abroad into emigration-cum-expatriation.¹⁶ I will focus on the

13 Like other Russians residents in Berlin at the time, e.g., Gorky, Shklovsky, and Erenburg, Bely returned to the Soviet Union (in 1923) after living there briefly.

14 The quotation is often attributed to Zinaida Gippius.

15 We should keep in mind that Roman Gul' was a leftist liberal, not a monarchist conservative. In other words, his mission and that of those like him enacted a liberal set of values against the Soviet disciplinary panopticon, unlike the right-wing émigrés who sought the restoration of pre-revolutionary Russia.

16 Other writers went abroad as part of the contemporary Jewish emigration, a familiar institutionalized instance of the spatial turn known as the Third Wave. Soviet

tamizdat publications of Abram Tertz, Sasha Sokolov's first novel *Shkola dlia durakov* (*A School for Fools*), and Vasily Aksenov's collective almanac *Metropol'* (*Metropole*). All three writers ended up as émigrés or expatriates in the west.

Here is how Siniavsky described his experience in a private conversation in 1984: the texts written by Abram Tertz clandestinely crossed the border with Siniavsky, following them/him years later (after he was released from the camps in 1971).¹⁷ He compared Tertz's writings to the nose in Gogol's eponymous story, which split off from its owner's body and, according to rumor, tried to escape across the border. This was Siniavsky's metaphor for the fragmentation and illegal journey of his alternate literary body, as shaped by a Gogolian metaphor, representing the *embodiment* of his spatial turn or publishing in forbidden space.¹⁸ Textually, in other words, he possessed two bodies, public and private (secret), that is, publishable and unpublishable in panoptic gosizdat. His last gosizdat publication was the highly acclaimed introduction to Pasternak's 1965 volume in the *Biblioteka poeta* series, written in Siniavsky's voice as a liberal Soviet critic, which appeared shortly before his arrest and trial in 1965–1966.

In an *Izvestia* article published during his trial, Siniavsky was labelled *perevertysch*, (Eremin 1966) meaning “shapeshifter,” which in fact Siniavsky was, but not in the derogatory Soviet sense. In his later autobiographical novel *Spokoinoi nochi* (*Goodnight*, 1984), written in emigration and signed Abram Tertz, the narrator gives thanks to Tertz, calling him his “dark double.”¹⁹ He describes Tertz as a street person: young, tough, handsome, ironic, a knife in his pocket, in contrast to Siniavsky the honest academic. (The pseudonym

Jewish writers, often only partly Jewish, left the Soviet Union as third-wave émigrés using Israeli visas.

- 17 I recorded our conversation and have a transcript of it, but it has never been published.
- 18 Shortly after crossing the international border in 1973, he claimed that all serious writing was premised on escape and the transgression of borders (Siniavskii 1974: 180).
- 19 When I interviewed Siniavsky at his home in Fontenay aux Roses outside Paris, he gave me the manuscript of *Spokoinoi nochi*, which I read then. See my chapter about him in *Zapiski russkoi amerikanki* (Matich 2017: 477–489 and 441–458 *passim*).

comes from an Odessa thieves' song about the Jewish pickpocket Abrashka Tertz.) Among his double's descriptions of "true" literature is its equation with crime, as reflected in Catharine Nepomnyashchy's cornerstone study of Siniavsky, *Abram Tertz and the Poetics of Crime* (1995).

The subject of Tertz's best story, the phantasmagoric "Pkhentz," depicts a shapeshifting extraterrestrial whose monstrous body is cactus-like, consisting of multiple parts that must be bound together before it puts on human clothes to hide its shape from the public.²⁰ On the one hand, the story represents Siniavsky's fear of exposure; on the other, "Pkhentz" sounds like "Tertz," and his first name, like Siniavsky's, is Andrei.²¹ It is as if Siniavsky were also challenging the Soviet surveillance machine by insinuating his dual identity into the story, but, as we know, it took a very long time for the authorities to discover Tertz's identity. Written the same year as *On Socialist Realism*, "Pkhentz" exemplifies the essay's ending: "I put my hope in a phantasmagoric art, with hypotheses instead of Purpose, an art in which the grotesque will replace realistic description." Such art is instantiated by the shapeshifting of God's monstrous entrails: "We have not lost our enthusiasm about the metamorphoses of God that take place before our very eyes, the miraculous transformations of His entrails and His cerebral convolutions" (Terts 1982: 218–219).²² Provocation was one of Tertz's well-known political as well as literary devices.

In fact, he quoted "Pkhentz" at his trial: "In my unpublished story 'Pkhentz' there is a sentence that I consider autobiographical: 'You think that if I am different, you must immediately curse me...' So, there it is: I am

20 Joseph Frank wrote that "Pkhentz" is "one of the few contemporary works worthy to be placed beside Kafka's 'Metamorphosis'" (2010: 232).

21 Pkhentz's patronymic Kazimirovich may be said to evoke Siniavsky's patronymic Donatovich. Both names are of Polish origin.

22 "я возлагаю надежду на искусство фантасмагорическое, с гипотезами вместо цели и гротеском взамен бытописания. [...] [М]ы не утратили восторга перед происходящими на наших глазах метаморфозами бога, перед чудовищной перистальтикой его кишок – мозговых извилин" (Terts 1988: 63–64). The essay first appeared in English in 1960.

different”²³ (Nepomniashchi 2011: 74). Shape and shaping are key concepts not only for Siniavsky-Tertz, but also for literary texts in general, as well as the politics of publishing. Censorship, including self-censorship, was crucial to what may be described as the “shaping” of the Soviet publishing industry.

We may also read “Pkhentz” and tamizdat’s spatial turn in relation to diasporic writing as defamiliarization. Years ago, I wrote an article titled “Diaspora as *Ostranenie*,” with the subtitle “Russian Literature in Emigration” (Matich 1996). What I was suggesting is that Shklovsky’s key concept of *ostranenie* could be applied to tamizdat as writing premised on the refusal to adapt to the Soviet “automatized” literary discourse, thus instigating the beginning of the literary spatial turn in the late 1950s. As Siniavsky claimed in “Dissidentstvo kak lichnyi opyt” (“Dissidence as Personal Experience,” 1982), literature by definition represents “thinking differently” (*inakomyslie*). He called it “heretical,” as well as “phantasmagoric,” thereby referencing *On Socialist Realism*.

The Siniavsky/Tertz divide could be said to articulate or define the self-conscious public/private dichotomy that characterized the identity of part of the Soviet intelligentsia during the late 1950s and especially later, with the public identity representing compromise, and private identity standing for hidden political and/or aesthetic views, combined with longing for the space located over *there*. Tamizdat engaged a similar public/private divide: the private continued to exist until the writer’s publication abroad went public. For Siniavsky, however, it mobilized yet another kind of spatial dislocation into a real-life panopticon, in this instance, his body, although Tertz secretly came along and continued to write in the camps, producing *A Voice from the Chorus* and *Progulki s Pushkinym* (*Strolls with Pushkin*), which Siniavsky smuggled in long letters to his wife Maria Rozanova. Remarkably, these texts made their way to her without being censored.

It was in prison that Siniavsky began writing about the spatiality of prose (*prostranstvo prozy*), a late modernist and postmodern instantiation of the literary spatial turn. Here is the opening of *A Voice from the Chorus*:

23 “У меня в неопубликованном рассказе ‘Пхенц’ есть фраза, которую я считаю автобиографической: ‘Подумаешь, если я другой, так уж сразу и ругаться’. Так вот, я другой [...]”

A book which goes backwards and forwards, advances and retreats, sometimes moves close to the reader and at other times runs away from him and flows like a river through new countries [...] [A] book which grows like a tree, embracing space with the totality of its leaves and [...] breathes by expanding almost infinitely, only to contract again down to a small point.

(Tertz 1995: 4)²⁴

Книга, которая ходит вперед и назад, наступает и отступает, то придвигается вплотную к читателю, то убегает от него и течет, как река, омывая новые страны [...]. [К]нига [...] которая растет, как дерево, обнимая пространство целостной массой листвы и воздуха [...], способная дышать, раздаваясь вширь почти до бесконечности и тут же сжимаясь до точки.

(Terts 1974: 7)

* * *

Another example of spatial image-making are Tertz's architectural metaphors of prison, its cathedral-like vaults, and the camp's labyrinths, consisting of the Soviet empire's innards and skeletons. In *Goodnight*, the author depicts them by evoking Proust's famed metaphor of writing as the construction of a Gothic cathedral:²⁵ "I was a naughty boy with a passion for writing in contrast to this powerful hundred-headed echo that rang in the echoing cathedral vaults" of prison (Terts 1984: 40).²⁶ Strikingly, Siniavsky-Tertz

24 Writing in the Dubrovlag camp, Tertz described Europe as a space "crisscrossed by cutting edges, like broken glass" (Tertz 1995: 263) ("Пространство похоже на треснувшее стекло", Terts 1974: 263).

25 In a letter to his friend Jean de Gaigneron, Proust wrote about his architectural conception of *Remembrance of Things Past* as a cathedral (Leonard 2001: 52–53).

26 "Я был мальчишкой со своей страстью к писательству по сравнению с этим столь сильным, тысячеглавым эхом, которое разносилось по гулким сводам собора" (Terts 1984: 40). Mikhail Epstein associates Tertz's statement that the "text as a spatial entity should be neither a static platform, nor a tape moving in one direction" ("текст как пространственная задача не может быть ни статичной площадкой, ни движущейся в одном направлении лентой") with his metaphorical postmodernist orientation (Epshtein 1995: 91).

transformed Proust's Gothic cathedral into a cathedral-like prison: the labor camp topos with its labyrinths was for him/them the twentieth-century symbol of the "spatiality of prose." Like some earlier modernists, he associated this new spatial turn with the visual arts and architecture. As he wrote in the late eighties, "the verbal mass itself possesses architectural parameters characteristic of architecture and representational art" (Siniavskii 1988: 27),²⁷ reconfiguring narrative temporality into spatial form. Images are shaped and change shape by means of metaphors and other literary devices and narrative strategies. Joseph Frank introduced the term "spatial form" in 1945, naming Proust and Joyce among its earlier practitioners (Frank 1945: 125).²⁸

Siniavsky's prison sentence resulted an internal border crossing into the interior space of the camps. Alexander Solzhenitsyn metaphorized them as "thousands of islands of the spellbound Archipelago," an archipelago that he mapped for that matter. An autobiographical aside about *Arkhipelag Gulag* (*The Gulag Archipelago*): I remember a dinner at the home of the well-known medievalist and cultural figure Dmitry Likhachev in Leningrad in the autumn of 1973. A survivor of the camps, Likhachev gestured that his apartment was bugged, turned off the phone, turned the radio on very loud, and told us in a hushed voice that Solzhenitsyn's typist Elizaveta Voronianskaya had committed suicide.²⁹ It happened after five days of interrogation by the KGB, at the end of which she disclosed the secret location of the *Archipelago*

27 "Сама словесная масса обладает, оказалось, пространственными параметрами, которые свойственны архитектуре и изобразительному искусству."

28 Spatial form in the verbal arts is associated with the influence of painting and architecture on literature in the early twentieth century. An important example in Russian literature is Bely's *Petersburg*, which Nikolai Berdiaev described as a "cubist novel" ("kubisticheskii-futuristicheskii roman") in 1916, comparing it to Picasso's paintings (Berdiaev 2004: 414).

29 Among the people present at the dinner were the literary scholar Dmitry Maksimov and the physicist Lev Loitsiansky, whom I had met in Los Angeles in 1968. Loitsiansky was part of a group of Soviet scholars who came to Caltech right after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, as a result of which all the group's official meetings with American scholars were canceled. I introduced him to Andrei Sakharov's tamizdat book *Progress, Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom* (*Razmysleniia o progresse, mirnom sosushchestvovanii i intellektual'noi svobode*), which had just been published in English.

manuscript. This resulted in Solzhenitsyn's decision to give the go-ahead to his Paris publisher YMCA Press. The volume appeared in early 1974. Solzhenitsyn was arrested and expelled from the Soviet Union a month later.³⁰

Among other authors that followed their texts abroad into exile were (in chronological order) Joseph Brodsky, Aleksandr Galich, Vladimir Maksimov, Viktor Nekrasov, Alexandr Zinov'ev, Vasily Aksenov, Yuz Aleshkovsky, Vladimir Voinovich, and Georgy Vladimov. Among the younger authors (in chronological order of emigration) were Eduard Limonov, Sasha Sokolov, Aleksei Tsvetkov, and Sergei Dovlatov. Unlike most of the other writers, Sokolov was unknown at the time. His first novel, *A School for Fools*, was published by Ardis, which, as we know, also published authors like Nabokov with the purpose of clandestinely sending their books to their homeland.

Tamizdat initiated the in-betweenness, spatial and otherwise, of these authors. This circumstance typifies all diasporas, with the difference that the Russians could not travel home, just like their first- and second-wave forebears. In-betweenness was also fundamental to the so-called internal emigration in the Soviet Union. Some examples of tamizdat texts from different generations whose authors did not emigrate include Nadezhda Mandelstam's memoirs, published by Chekhov House in 1970, which became an international bestseller without resulting in her persecution, apparently. Venedikt Erofeev's *Moskva–Petushki* (*Moscow to the End of the Line*), famously characterized by its spatialization of time, was issued as a separate book by YMCA Press in 1977.³¹ *Kolymskie rasskazy* (*Kolyma Tales*) by Varlam Shalamov first appeared in samizdat, a common publishing trajectory, and was published abroad in Russian without Shalamov's approval in 1978. Andrei Bitov's *Pushkinskii dom* (*Pushkin House*), first offered to gosizdat and rejected, like *Doctor Zhivago*, was published by Ardis in 1978.³²

30 I will never forget the amount of space occupied by the headline about Solzhenitsyn's expulsion from the Soviet Union in the *Los Angeles Times*: it was bigger than any headline I had seen before.

31 *Moskva–Petushki* was first published in the Israeli journal *Ami* in 1973.

32 The older Vasily Grossman's short novel *Vse techet* (*Forever Flowing*) was published by Posev in Frankfurt in 1970, while *Zhizn' i sud'ba* (*Life and Fate*) was published in Switzerland after his death.

* * *



Fig. 1
Sasha Sokolov in the 1960s

A very different example of tamizdat as spatial turn is *A School for Fools* (1976) by Sasha Sokolov, a writer of the younger generation, which caused a big literary stir, as exemplified, among others, by Nabokov, who famously proclaimed it “an enchanting, tragic, and touching book.”³³ In-betweenness as a key feature of tamizdat had defined Sokolov from birth. He was born in Ottawa, Canada, soon to move to Moscow, where he grew up. His father, the high-ranking military diplomat Vsevolod Sokolov, was accused of involvement in the Gouzenko Affair, uncovered in 1946 and involving the Soviet

³³ Carl Proffer sent the text to Nabokov for his appraisal. Nabokov invited Sokolov to visit him in Montreux, but the young writer did not go, supposedly because he was embarrassed.

attempt to steal Canadian and American atomic secrets; expecting arrest, the family fled from Canada when Sasha was three years old. The geographic in-betweenness of their travel was circuitous: the Sokolovs first made their way to Vancouver, from where they traveled by ship to Vladivostok and then on to Moscow. Sasha also attempted to cross the Soviet border illegally into Iran in 1964. He was arrested, but his high-ranking father helped obtain his release.

As Sokolov said to me in a recent phone conversation (we have been friends since the late seventies), transgression of borders has been his life-long obsession: borders are like a cage from which he invariably wants to escape.³⁴ Movement in geographic space has informed not only his personal, but also his literary life: the geographic tamizdat journey of *A School for Fools* from Moscow to the west was peripatetic, taking many twists and turns before making its way to Ardis. (It may be worth noting that Pavel Norvegov, one of the novel's main characters, is a geographer.) The novel has since become a masterwork of the Russian literary canon. The manuscript was sent abroad through the Austrian embassy with the assistance of Johanna Steindl, Sokolov's second wife. The novel arrived at Ardis from Alexandria, Egypt (Sokolov does not know how or why) with its first page missing, in other words, without the title and author's name, meaning that initially no one knew who had written the book. Maria (Masha) Slonim, the granddaughter of Maksim Litvinov, who was then working at Ardis, gave the novel a glowing review. Brodsky, one of the first to read it, gave it a stellar review as well. He had decided that its author was his Leningrad writer friend Vladimir Maramzin, but finding out soon afterwards that Maramzin wasn't the author, he withdrew the recommendation.

If tamizdat is characterized by in-betweenness in geographical terms, *A School for Fools* deploys it as a narrative and stylistic device in a work that may be described in terms of postmodernist in-betweenness. In Sokolov's case, it was not Soviet politics, but a literature calling for unlimited freedom that made the novel unpublishable in the Soviet Union during the seventies. For starters, the in-between of the double/multiple narrative persona of

34 See my chapter on Sasha Sokolov in *Zapiski russkoi amerikanki* (Matich 2017: 403–419).

adolescent “student so-and-so,” who suffers from schizophrenia, represents a kind of literary schizophrenia, the be- and end-all of Sokolov’s metatext.³⁵ Mark Lipovetsky identifies the creativity in *A School for Fools* with madness, inscribed in what he calls a “dialogue with chaos” (2016: 93).³⁶

I would add that the narrator, like Homer’s Penelope, endlessly weaves, unplaits, and reweaves the text, a word originating in the Latin *texere*, meaning “to weave,” and the Greek *techne*, meaning “art,” as well as “technology.”³⁷ The narrator compares his path to the river Lethe, “the barely shining needle sewing up a cloud shredded into pieces by the wind” (“я сравню его с ходом тусклой швейной иглы, сшивающей облако, ветром разъятое на куски”; Sokolov 2015: 55), an unusual image that may be compared to reweaving. Elsewhere, he deploys the image of weaving sound into a “ball of noise.” In Russian, the narrative evokes the metaphor *pletienie sloves* (“word-weaving”) from Old Russian literature, which characterizes, among other things, the expansive tropes and numerous stream-of-consciousness passages in *A School for Fools*.

To this I would add the novel’s chronotope, typified by remarkable Ovidian metamorphoses that take place in space-time, for example, the narrator’s transfiguration into the multi-voiced Nymphaea Alba (Latin for “white lily”), whose memory is selective: selective memory is constitutive of *A School for Fools*. The narrator’s transformation into the lily and back, which takes place in the river Lethe (a space of death meaning “oblivion”) that flows back and forth, as does the lily, also serves to visually materialize the novel’s kaleidoscopic in-betweenness. Among other significant metamorphoses is the transformation of men into birds and back (for example, the mythical Phoenix) or butterflies.

Here is a different example of the back and forth in the novel: “We worked there and here, here and there – everywhere where there was an opportunity

35 The school in *A School for Fools* is for mentally disabled students.

36 Lipovetsky also aligns the novel with Nabokov’s work. Sokolov, however, has steadfastly claimed that he had not read Nabokov before writing *A School for Fools*.

37 The primary meaning of *techne*.

to hang, that is, to lend a hand. And whenever we would come, we would hear: Look, here they are – Those Who Came” (Sokolov 2015: 175).³⁸

If *tamizdat* is associated with back-and-forth movement in space, that of *A School for Fools* takes place primarily in time, flowing from the past into the future and from there back into the past. Addressing Professor Akatov’s double Leonardo (da Vinci), one of the student narrators says:

Neither you nor I nor any of our acquaintances is able to explain what we have in mind when we begin to consider the topic of time, when we conjugate the verb *to be* and divide life into yesterday, today and tomorrow, as if these words differed in meaning, as if someone hadn’t said long ago that tomorrow is just a different word for today, as if we were able to understand even a tiny part of what is happening to us here, in the isolated space of the mysterious grain of sand, if everything that happens here, is, occurs, and exists here – really, truly *was*, *occurred*, and *existed*. Dear Leonardo, not long ago (now, soon) I was going (am going, will be going) in a rowboat down a large river. Before (after) that I was (will be) there many times[.]
(Sokolov 2015: 25)

Ни вы, ни я и никто из наших приятелей не в состоянии объяснить, что мы разумеем, рассуждая о времени, спрягая глагол *есть* и разлагая жизнь на вчера, сегодня и завтра, будто эти слова отличаются друг от друга по смыслу, будто не сказано: *завтра* – это лишь другое имя *сегодня*, будто нам дано осознать хоть малую долю того, что происходит с нами здесь, в замкнутом пространстве необъяснимой

38 “Мы работали там и тут, здесь и там – повсюду, где была возможность наложить, то есть, приложить руки. И куда бы мы ни шли, о нас говорили: смотрите, вот они – Те Кто Пришли” (Sokolov 2017: 87). As Alexander Boguslawski points out in the notes to his translation of *A School for Fools*, the phrase “an opportunity to hang, that is, to lend a hand” (in the original, “где была возможность наложить, то есть приложить руки”) indicates that the narrator almost makes a slip of the tongue, something he does often: “наложить руки” in Russian means “to kill,” whereas the narrator meant “to help” (“приложить руки”) (Sokolov 2015: 191, note 175).

песчинки, будто все, что здесь происходит, есть, является, существует – действительно, на самом деле *есть, является, существует*. Дорогой Леонардо, недавно (сию минуту, в скором времени) я плыл (плыву, буду плыть) на весельной лодке по большой реке. До этого (после этого) я много раз бывал (буду бывать) там[.]
(Sokolov 2017: 14)

The passage continues in this vein. The biblical reference to “grain of sand” evokes William Blake’s poem “Auguries of Innocence” (ca. 1803) which begins with the line “To see a World in a Grain of Sand,” invoking infinity or the absence of time.

But instead of temporal progression, the passage represents the intersection of time and space, suggesting the spatialization of time in the sense of its transcendence or abolition – time as relational or premised on simultaneity, which is one of the characteristics of postmodernism. I remind the reader of Proust’s Gothic cathedral as an image of the spatialization of time and Tertz’s spatiality of prose.

The question is whether we can also attribute spatialized time to the practice of tamizdat. I believe we can, if we consider its back and forth movement, not only in space, but also time, especially between sending manuscripts abroad, publishing them there, and their returning to the Russian reader. As for weaving and reweaving, they can also be found in the postmodernism that typifies some of the most important tamizdat publications, including Bitov’s *Pushkin House*. In other words, the in-betweenness of *A School for Fools* is manifested equally, if not primarily, in its literary aspect.

* * *

A very different case of *tamizdat* is that of almanac *Metropole* (1978–1979), important not for its literary qualities, but because it was a public and collective affair instead of a secret action by a single writer, one that brought together gos-, sam-, and tamizdat writers.³⁹ The almanac featured contribu-

39 The authors of *Metropole* included (alphabetically, besides Aksenov) writer Yuz Aleshkovsky (b. 1929), prosaist and dramatist Arkady Arkanov (b. 1933), poet Bella Akhmadulina (b. 1937), cultural historian Leonid Batkin (b. 1932), writer Andrei

tions by twenty-three Russian authors, plus John Updike.⁴⁰ Initially, it was not intended for publication abroad, although we can question this claim. One of the reasons *Metropole* was unpublishable in gosizdat is that it had not been submitted to the Soviet disciplinary panopticon. In fact, its five editors called themselves “compilers” (*sostaviteli*), proclaiming total authorial independence from all editorial intervention. Initially a samizdat publication, with the compilers producing twelve copies, it appeared in Ardis after the Writers’ Union declared it unpublishable during a meeting in which its political leadership viciously attacked the almanac’s compilers.⁴¹ An international scandal ensued. The two youngest authors, Viktor Erofeev and Evgeny Popov were expelled from the Writers’ Union, after which Aksenov, Semen Lipkin and Inna Lisnianskaya publicly resigned their memberships.

Another difference is that only four of the authors ended up following their publications abroad. The others preferred to continue forging their literary identities in between gosizdat and a non-Soviet private identity, including between sam- and tamizdat.⁴² *Metropole*, as far as I know, was Andrei Voznesensky’s only tamizdat outing; in fact, one of his *Metropole* poems was simultaneously published in gosizdat, subverting the almanac sam-/tamizdat thrust. Despite the almanac’s notoriety, Bella Akhmadulina and Fazil’ Iskander seemingly suffered few consequences, meaning that, in

Bitov (b. 1937), artist David Borovsky (b. 1934), writer Viktor Erofeev (b. 1947), prosaist and screenwriter Fridrikh Gorenshtein (b. 1932), prosaist and poet Fazil’ Iskander (b. 1929); poet, writer and critic Yury Karabchievsky (b. 1938), actor and writer Petr Kozhevnikov (b. 1953), poet Yury Kublanovsky (b. 1947), poets Semen Lipkin (b. 1913) and Inna Lisnianskaya (b. 1924), artist Boris Messerer (b. 1933), writer and dramatist Evgeny Popov (b. 1946), art historian Vasily Rakitin (b. 1937), poet Evgeny Rein (b. 1936), dramatist and theater director Mark Rozovsky (b. 1937), poet Genrikh Saghir (b. 1928), physicist and poet Viktor Trostnikov (b. 1928), writer Boris Vakhtin (b. 1930), poet Andrei Voznesensky (b. 1933), and poet, actor and bard singer Vladimir Vysotsky (b. 1937). The line-up also included the American writer John Updike (b. 1932).

40 A selection from Updike’s novel *The Coup* (1978), set in an African country, appeared in *Metropole*.

41 For an annotated transcript of the meeting, see Zalambani 2006.

42 Publishing in-betweenness characterized the writing of the poet Evgeny Rein and the famous bard singer Vladimir Vysotsky.

some instances, tamizdat publishing resulted in different consequences for its authors.⁴³



Fig. 2

Vasily Aksenov and Olga Matich discussing Metropole in 1978

Aksenov initiated the *Metropole* project along with Erofeev. As Aksenov's friend, I served as one of the go-betweens with Ardis. Sitting on a bench outside Moscow's Ukraina Hotel in the summer of 1978 (Aksenov brought a samizdat copy of *Metropole* along, which was huge), we discussed the publication. Aksenov asked me to tell Carl Proffer not to go ahead with it (one of the twelve copies had been sent to Ardis by diplomatic pouch) because they were hopeful that *Metropole* would be published at home. An amusing aspect of this part of the story was that my fourteen-year-old daughter Asya entertained Erofeev with a popular candy called Pop Rocks that exploded in your

43 An Akhmadulina volume had appeared in tamizdat about ten years earlier, but the poems had been published in gosizdat before.

mouth.⁴⁴ Erofeev, who had accompanied Aksenov, loved the Pop Rocks and asked Asya for a handful to take home. That same summer I also delivered a letter to Proffer from Bitov regarding *Pushkin House*, which was published shortly afterwards.⁴⁵

My main personal tamizdat experience was with Aksenov's *Ozhog* (*The Burn*), completed in 1975, that is, before *Metropole*. I had met Aksenov in Moscow in 1973. (As a parting gift he gave me his Nicholas II pre-revolutionary ruble, saying "next time in Israel," meaning that he was thinking about emigration already then.) His first American experience was as writer in residence at UCLA in 1975. After returning to Moscow, Aksenov sent me the manuscript of *Ozhog* for safekeeping via the Austrian embassy.⁴⁶ We had agreed beforehand that I would send a copy to Ardis and another to the well-known Seattle attorney Leonard Schroeter, who represented the publishing interests of Evgenia Ginzburg's (Aksenov's mother) in the west.⁴⁷ Ginzburg's two-volume Gulag memoirs *Krutoi marshrut* (*Journey into the Whirlwind* and *In the Whirlwind*) widely translated and very well received, brought financial reward.⁴⁸ (To repeat: tamizdat authors dreamed of economic, not only symbolic capital.)

Before Aksenov left Los Angeles, we agreed on a playful secret code based on Frank Sinatra: if he were to mention Ol' Blue Eyes in a telegram it was the go-ahead to publish. In a letter to me, Aksenov wrote, "I often remember Franky. It would be interesting to know your impressions of his new song."⁴⁹ (Playfulness infused both his writing and everyday behavior, whereas Siniaevsky was playful primarily in his guise as Tertz.) The first tamizdat edition of *The Burn* (1980) was published not in Russian, but Italian, typically the

44 My daughter brought a bag of Pop Rocks along with her to entertain the Russians that she met.

45 Consequently, Bitov was cut off from gosizdat, also because of his involvement in *Metropole*.

46 See my chapter on Aksenov in *Zapiski russkoi amerikanki* (Matich 2017: 352–375).

47 Schroeter was actively involved in the passage of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment (1974), which supported the emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel.

48 Harrison Salisbury, for example, gave the second volume (*Journey into the Whirlwind*) a glowing review in the *New York Times*.

49 Private letter in my personal archive.

case with texts expected to become bestsellers, which the novel, however, did not.⁵⁰ Aksenov had been expelled from the Soviet Union just before that. Ardis's Russian-language edition came out a few months later.

Instead of following his literary texts abroad like Siniavsky, Aksenov paved his way *there* gradually and conventionally – with visits abroad, then tamizdat, and finally *Ostrov Krym* (*The Island of Crimea*), finished and sent abroad in 1979, and published by Ardis in 1981. The novel is a representation of Russia's spatial in-betweenness – in between the imaginary island of Crimea, partly resembling a geographically displaced Southern California (where Aksenov spent part of 1975), inhabited by imaginary old émigrés, and the Soviet mainland. The racy James Bond-like fantasy deconstructs, on the one hand, the old emigration's nostalgic myth of return to the homeland and, on the other, Aksenov's dream of Soviet westernization since the early sixties, first articulated in his very popular novella *Zvezdnyi bilet* (*Ticket to the Stars*, 1961). I would add to this the theory of the convergence of capitalism and socialism, developed by western social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s (for example, by the well-known first-wave émigré sociologist and Harvard professor Pitirim Sorokin) in response to the threat of Soviet-American mutually assured destruction, among other reasons.⁵¹ Andrei Sakharov's tamizdat book *Progress, Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom*, published in 1968, mentioned convergence.⁵² But instead of a utopian convergence, or a reunification of the two Russias, Aksenov's westernized Crimea is invaded by the Soviets.

Quite unexpectedly, *The Island of Crimea* prefigured Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, which is headed by someone named Aksenov (Sergey Aksenov) no less. In the novel, Crimea's Soviet "curator" describes the situation to his higher-ups:

50 Like Ginzburg's *Whirlwind*, it was published by Mondadori.

51 Pitirim Sorokin published "Mutual Convergence of the United States and the U.S.S.R. to the Mixed Sociocultural Type" in the *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* in 1960. I first wrote about Aksenov in relation to convergence theory in the eighties. *Matich* 1988: 642–651.

52 Sakharov's *Progress, Coexistence, and Intellectual Freedom* was first published in the *New York Times*, then as a book in 1968.

The West does not particularly care about Crimea. NATO pays it little strategic attention, and [keeps] track of it only because historically it is a potential hot spot. However, if a referendum were to take place tomorrow, no less than seventy percent of the population would vote for merging with the USSR. I am certain of it.

(Aksyonov 1983: 266)⁵³

Что касается Запада, то в стратегических планах НАТО Крыму сейчас уже не отводится серьезного места, но тем не менее действия натовских разведок говорят о пристальном внимании к острову как к возможному очагу дестабилизации. Словом, по моему мнению, если бы в данный момент провести соответствующий референдум, то не менее 70% населения высказалось бы за вхождение в СССР.

(Aksenov 1981: 232)

* * *

A Voice from the Chorus and *Strolls with Pushkin*, written in Dubrovlag, were published in emigration under the name of Abram Tertz. In other words, Sinavsky maintained his pseudonym, meaning that it was not only a coverup, but also an alternate literary persona. If an inmate's movements were strictly prescribed in the camps, *Strolls with Pushkin* suggests aimless, pleasurable walking.⁵⁴ "In the broad sense," writes Tertz, "Pushkin's road embodies the mobility and elusiveness of art, which is inclined to shift and therefore is not subject to strict rules with regard to where to go and why. Your way today, ours tomorrow. Art strolls" (Sinavsky 2016: 130).⁵⁵ If Tertz strolls with Pushkin, this is how the "brazen smart aleck" (Tertz's self-description) famously

53 I remember thinking, when Gorbachev came to power, that he reminded me of the liberal Marlen Kuzenkov, a character in Aksenov's novel who admires the Crimean consumer utopia.

54 The first edition of *Progulki s Pushkinym* appeared in London in 1975. In *Gogol's Shadow* was also published under the name of Abram Tertz.

55 "В широком смысле пушкинская дорога воплощает подвижность, неуловимость искусства, склонного к перемещениям и поэтому не придерживающегося твердых правил насчет того, куда и зачем идти. Сегодня к вам, завтра к нам. Искусство гуляет" (Terts 1975: 177).

renders the poet's emergence in Russian literature: instead of strolling, "Pushkin *ran into* great poetry on thin erotic legs and created a commotion" (ibid.: 9; my emphasis).⁵⁶ The line caused a scandal among émigré readers of all generations (and among readers back in Russia years later), as voiced, for example, in Roman Gul's article "Progulki khama s Pushkinym" (Gul' 1976).⁵⁷ Siniavsky's friend the French Slavist Michel Aucouturier described the émigré outrage, which included accusations that Tertz was a Russophobe, as "the second trial of Abram Tertz" ("Vtoroi sud nad Abramom Tertsem") in emigration (Okutiur'e 2006).⁵⁸

Even if the in-betweenness of Siniavsky-Tertz was a product of Soviet politics, it also invoked liminal textual spatiality, partly because of Tertz's literary experimentation in prison and outside it. As in his very early story "Pkhentz," Siniavsky transformed the geographic spatial turn into the spatialized narrative that he theorized in his later critical writing. As for Aksenov, his spatial turns were, by contrast, imbricated mostly in real and imaginary geographies, as were Sokolov's, but in very different terms that, most importantly, included literary ones.

* * *

If the old emigration's mission had to do with memory and preservation of "true" Russian culture in exile (that is, beyond Soviet borders), Soviet tamizdat writers wanted to tell the "truth" about their homeland and practice their literary craft freely, outside the bounds of Soviet publishing, in order to be heard by their readers. Unlike most old émigré writers, whose writing remained on the other side of the Iron Curtain, the new generation penetrated it by means of what I have described as the back-and-forth geographic movement of tamizdat. As for exile, it was already the subject of one of Tertz's

56 "На тоненьких эротических ножках вбежал Пушкин в большую поэзию и произвел переполох" (Terts 1975: 17).

57 Gul's essay appeared in *Novyi zhurnal* in 1976. "Kham" is, originally, a reference to Noah's son Ham, but when the name appears uncanceled in Russian it has the meaning of someone uncouth, a "boor."

58 In my opinion, the most perceptive analysis of *Strolls with Pushkin* was written by Mikhail Epstein (1995).

earliest stories, “Pkhentz” (1957), about an extraterrestrial exile, thus prefiguring, so to speak, its author’s later expatriation and diasporic existence.

The old emigration often referred to their space of exile as *russkoe zarubezh’e* – the Russian (community) abroad or Russia “beyond the borders” – and their literature as *zarubezhnaia literatura* – literature abroad or in exile. In his book *Russkaia literatura v izgnanii* (*Russian Literature in Exile*), first published in 1956, Gleb Struve described it as “a temporarily intended stream of general Russian literature that was flowing elsewhere, which, when the time comes, will flow into the mainstream of its literature,” that is, its waters will contribute to its enrichment (Struve 1984: 7).⁵⁹ Moving back in time, we encounter Berberova’s equation of exile and mission, while moving forward in time, we come to Sokolov’s third and last novel *Palisandriia* (*Astrophobia*, 1985), a mock memoir that parodies these old émigré concepts. Its parodic hero Palisander is sent into exile with a mission, spoofed at the end of the novel as the return of the remains of illustrious émigrés to their homeland.⁶⁰ That scene in turn refers to Nina Berberova’s dream in the autobiographical *Kursiv moi* (*The Italics Are Mine*) in which she waits at a Leningrad station for a train from Paris bearing the coffins of famous Russians, including that of her husband the poet Vladislav Khodasevich (Berberova 1993: 429–430).

As for the in-between of exile, Sokolov would write in 1985 that “all Russian literature – regardless of the place where its creators live: in the motherland or scattered around the globe – is at this moment – as it was yesterday – practically in exile” (Sokolov 2012: 15), suggesting the deterritorialization of *all* Russian literature. And in Aksenov’s *Island of Crimea*, the exile of the

59 “Эта зарубежная русская литература есть временно отведенный в сторону поток общерусской литературы, который – придет время – вольется в общее русло этой литературы” (Struve 1996: 22). Significantly, Struve’s book has not been translated into English. Yet the canonical English-language study of Soviet literature in those years was also written by Struve and went through several editions, the first appearing in 1935 (Struve 1935).

60 The orphan Palisander’s fantastic genealogy includes Rasputin, Beria, Catherine the Great, and many others. Unlike his exile, Palisander’s childhood is idyllic, with Stalin as his main patron and father figure. See Matich 1986.

old émigrés and their longing for their homeland as a desire to unite with the motherland is parodied, resulting in a Soviet invasion.

Questions of exile and “metropolitanism” vs. émigré literature were discussed at *The Third Wave: Russian Literature in Emigration*, a conference that I organized at the University of Southern California in 1981, in which all three authors under discussion in this essay participated. (Aksenov as the last one of them to have left the Soviet Union.) The keynote lecture, titled “Two Literatures or One?” was delivered (in Russian) by Siniavsky who, predictably, insisted on the oneness of Russian literature regardless of borders (Siniavskii 1984).⁶¹

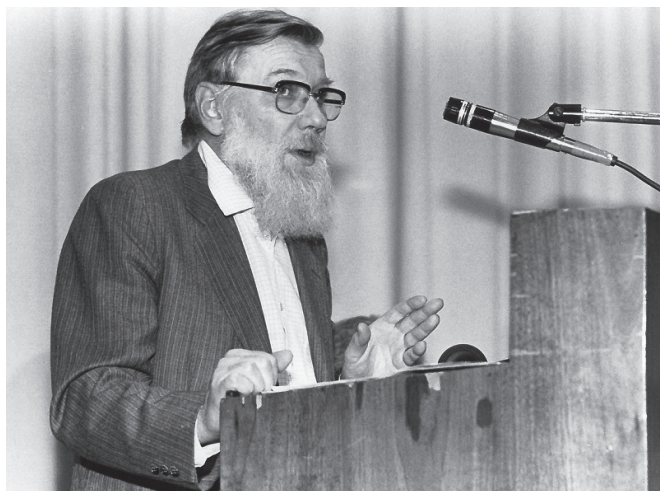


Fig. 3
Andrei Siniavsky speaking at the Third Wave Conference in 1981

61 As for the in-betweenness of the languages (Russian and English) spoken at the conference, three United Nations interpreters translated each presentation into the other language. Everyone, including members of the audience, were provided with headphones so that they could fully understand the proceedings. English was the language spoken by most of the scholars, American publishers, and journalists who were present, as well as by Edward Albee, whose role was to represent American literature.

The Third Wave's main flaw, Siniavsky argued, was the absence of serious literary criticism and the reduction of literature to politics: "The division of literature according to political party lines, no matter which side, induces feelings of protest in me [...] The best political stance is not a criterion of art."⁶² Siniavsky was particularly critical of a 1980 article titled "In-Between Literature and the Criterion of Authenticity" ("Promezhutochnaia literatura i kriterii podlinnosti"), by the third-wave émigré Yuri Mal'tsev, published in Vladimir Maksimov's journal *Kontinent* (Mal'tsev 1980).⁶³ Mal'tsev saw in-betweenness not in diasporic writing, but in texts like Yuri Trifonov's canonical *Dom na naberezhnoi* (*House on the Embankment*, 1976), published in gosizdat – that is, it had been subject to Soviet censorship. According to Mal'tsev, the novel retreated into psychological prose in which "true" memory was repressed.⁶⁴ Siniavsky argued against Mal'tsev's stance that in-between

62 "Разделение литературы по партийно-политическому признаку, с какой бы стороны оно ни исходило, возбуждает у меня чувство протеста. [...] Самая хорошая политика – это еще не критерий художественности" (Siniavskii 1984: 26).

63 As its title suggests, *Kontinent*, the most important third-wave journal, was conceived as a continental European undertaking. The first issue, in 1974, featured contributions by the Romanian-French playwright Eugène Ionesco, the Yugoslav politician Milovan Djilas, the Czechoslovak-German chess player and political activist Luděk Pachman, the German journalist Carl Gustaf Ströhm, Hungarian Cardinal József Mindszenty, and the Russian scientist and dissident Andrei Sakharov, as well as Brodsky, Solzhenitsyn, Siniavsky, philosopher Alexandr Piatigorsky, art historian Igor' Golomshtok, and two old émigrés, Archbishop Ioann Shakhovskoi (aka the poet Strannik) and his sister Zinaida Shakhovskaya, publisher of the Paris newspaper *Russkaia mysl'* (*Russian Thought*). The journal's original multicultural liberal politics soon deteriorated, however. By 1980, *Kontinent* had positioned itself against the liberal democratic wing of the emigration, associated with Siniavsky and *Sintaksis*, edited by Siniavsky's wife Maria Rozanova, which actively polemized with Maksimov's much bigger and well-funded journal.

64 Mal'tsev's well-known book *Russkaia vol'naia literatura. 1955–1975*, an overview of sam- and tamizdat, appeared in 1976, two years after he emigrated. Unlike his later 1980 essay, it contains many subtle and compelling observations about works of tamizdat literature. It features a chapter praising Siniavsky's oeuvre, including the works written in the camps and published in emigration. For instance, regarding his earlier tamizdat diary-like *Mysli vrasplokh* (1966), published under Tertz's name and translated as *Unguarded Thoughts* (1972), Mal'tsev notes its affinities with Vasily Rozanov's famous *Fallen Leaves* – a similarity that the old émigré Roman Gul'

authors like Trifonov, Vasily Shukshin, and Valentin Rasputin were not writers because their works had been submitted to Soviet censors. By contrast, Siniavsky gave preference to authors who had left the trampled “mainstream road” (*stolbovaia* or *protoptannaia doroga*)⁶⁵ to follow side roads and paths. This was his own proclivity. As Tertz famously says in *Strolls with Pushkin*, “Art strolls” (“Iskusstvo guliaet”).

Yet instead of further expounding on his own literary proclivities and views regarding “one or two” Russian literatures, Siniavsky focused on third-wave politics and the Mal’tsev article. In other words, the liberal-democratic aesthete politicized his lecture by polemicizing with the politically conservative nationalist wing of the emigration, especially Solzhenitsyn and, by implication, Maksimov⁶⁶ (whom Siniavsky did not mention by name), con-

noted at the same time. (Siniavsky published his outstanding book on Rozanov, “*Opavshie list’ia*” V. V. Rozanova, in 1982.) Mal’tsev goes on to describe *A Voice from the Chorus* as “the most unusual book in all of contemporary literature” (“самая необычная во всей современной литературе”) including its striking comments about art and its secrets (Mal’tsev 1976: 70). He also gives a very positive, thoughtful assessment of *A School for Fools*. I have gone into the details of his previous reception of Siniavsky’s works by way of contrasting Mal’tsev’s politicized essay with the earlier study, written mostly before his departure from the Soviet Union.

65 Siniavskii 1985: 30.

66 Maksimov at first accepted the invitation to the third-wave conference (he was invited as the editor of *Kontinent*), but when he learned that Siniavsky would be the keynote speaker, he withdrew from the conference and urged Maramzin, whom he originally asked me to invite, to withdraw as well. Maksimov also tried to persuade Aksenov to withdraw, claiming, among other things, that I was affiliated either with the CIA or KGB! I don’t remember which. (Some of their correspondence on the matter was published in *Voprosy literatury*, No. 3, 2013, under the title “Vokrug kaliforniiskoi konferentsii po russkoi literature.”) There was also the case of the Polish poet Czesław Miłosz, who had originally accepted our invitation, but then rejected it. I don’t know whether he had been swayed by Maksimov or his withdrawal was due to Nobel Prize that he had won in the meantime, or to something else. After seeing the poster for the conference with his name on it at UC Berkeley, Miłosz telephoned me, demanding that his name be removed. When I told him that it could not be done (all the posters had been mailed out), he started yelling at me, so I hung up. Solzhenitsyn never responded to our invitation. There were two presentations dedicated to his work, both pro and contra. Alexander Yanov spoke against Solzhenitsyn in a talk ironically, not to say sarcastically, titled “The Wizard

tinuing the tradition, established by the first-wave or “old” émigrés, whom he quoted, of sorting out political differences. Without giving voice to his ironic Tertzian double, Siniavsky spoke as a rather conventional representative of diasporic culture, invoking this political tradition under the rubric of “true literary criticism” and its absence in third-wave literature. Instead of in-betweenness as hybridity or a mediation of two extremes (for and against), he assumed an essentialist position vis-à-vis Mal’tsev’s totalizing view of literature published in the Soviet Union, a vision of in-betweenness not as defined by either space or time, but by political conformism.

Siniavsky’s lecture, however, ended with a call for mediation and building bridges between the barriers of *here* and *there*, one of the functions that third-wave literary critics could have or should have assumed by way of establishing an in-betweenness premised on hybridity and compromise, and healing tamizdat’s geographic divide.

* * *

I have focused on Siniavsky-Tertz, Sokolov, and Aksenov partly by way of demonstrating their very different experiences of the spatial turn, both in geographic and literary terms. Compared with Siniavsky, Aksenov’s trajectory was much more straightforward and less complex. Sokolov’s was complex as well, but in a very different sense. An obvious difference was that Siniavsky’s spatial turn involved arrest, conviction, and a seven-year sentence in the labor camps, an episode that marked the beginning of the imprisonment and exile of dissidents in the Brezhnev era and the emergence of the dissident or human rights movement per se. Even though Siniavsky personally did not like this role, he was perceived as the titular mouthpiece of the

of Oz: In Defense of Solzhenitsyn.” Yanov refused to observe the time limits, continuing to speak even after everyone had left the auditorium. He withdrew his lecture from the post-conference published proceedings because I refused to print it in toto. His presentation was scathing, sometimes embarrassingly so. I was ultimately happy that it did not appear in the Ardis volume of talks from the conference. As for Brodsky, who was closer to the Maksimov camp than to the Siniavsky camp, he responded to our invitation by writing that he had another commitment. The same was true of Alexandr Zinov’ev. Such were some of the diasporic political passions that flared around the third-wave conference.

third-wave diaspora's liberal westernizing wing that opposed Solzhenitsyn and Maksimov.⁶⁷ By contrast, Siniavsky's alter ego Abram Tertz famously claimed that his differences with Soviet power were stylistic. Unlike Siniavsky, Aksenov tried to straddle the diaspora's rightist and leftist politics (as represented by Maksimov, on the one hand, and Siniavsky and Rozanova's journal *Sintaksis*, on the other). Unlike both of them, Sokolov's position was one of political disengagement and, like Tertz's, it emphasized style.

While the question of literary quality has not been the subject of my paper, much of the best Russian prose of the 1970s and 1980s was published in *tamizdat*, including *Moskva–Petushki* and *Pushkin House*, as well as *A School for Fools* and Tertz's writings, all of which were characterized by spatialization and the shaping and reshaping of imagery, narrative, point of view, etc. To these works we may add Shalamov's *Kolyma Tales*, *The Gulag Archipelago*, and others. In claiming this, I am in no way dismissing the literary significance of some *gosizdat* writing, especially Trifonov's *House on the Embankment*, one of the most important works of late twentieth-century Russian fiction.

In western literary studies, the spatial turn has usually been linked to postmodernism. Mark Lipovetsky has dubbed *Pushkin House*, *Moskva–Petushki*, and *A School for Fools* postmodern, associating them with *vnena-khodimost'*, meaning “outsideness” (Lipovetsky 1997: 30),⁶⁸ to which I would add in-betweenness, which also links modernism and postmodernism, traces of which may already be found in Bely's *Petersburg* and, much later, in *A School for Fools* and *Pushkin House*. Epstein describes Sokolov's novel as an instance of “decentered prose,” which unlike Solzhenitsyn's or Vasily Grossman's fiction, for instance, lacks such structural coordinates as a clear authorial position and voice (Epstein 2019: 216–217). In other words, the spatial turn as literary in-betweenness has to do with the relationship between such categories as center and periphery, inside and outside, which in political

67 Like Solzhenitsyn, Maksimov was actively opposed to the western left-leaning intelligentsia, perceived by both as either soft on the Soviet Union or pro-Soviet.

68 Lipovetsky also writes of the intersubjectivity of author, narrator, and characters, generating dialogism.

geographic terms were associated with tamizdat. In my opinion, however, its most important text in literary terms was *A School for Fools*.

Returning to Siniavsky once again, in an essay dedicated to his memory, Epstein calls him the first Russian postmodernist, focusing especially on *Strolls with Pushkin*. He claims that it was Siniavsky-Tertz's second literary manifesto (after *On Socialist Realism*), calling the book a poststructuralist deconstruction of the Russian poetic hero myth, one premised on displacement (Epshtein 1995: 87–88). By contrast, *On Socialist Realism* is a deconstruction of socialist realism, whereas *Strolls with Pushkin* represents a peripatetic spatial turn. I would suggest that deconstruction is imagined in the book as the strolling of art.⁶⁹ For Siniavsky, writes Epstein, “language itself figures as emptiness, more precisely, a web of words” (“сам язык есть пустота, точнее, сетка слов”; Epshtein 1995: 90).

An Epilogue in Memory of Andrei Donatovich

Shortly after his emigration Siniavsky presented his essay titled “I” and “They” (written and delivered in 1975) at a symposium in Geneva entitled *Communication and Solitude*. Its focus is a highly provocative, shocking story of an extreme instance of prison communication during a New Year celebration that Siniavsky as Tertz calls the body's ultimate totalizing language. Literally representing *samoedstvo* as if it were a “theatrical spectacle,” an older convict demonstrates “eating oneself” to his lover in prison. He “orders” wine with ice cream, but “instead of cream pours sperm into his iron prison cup. Then he slits open a vein and pours blood over the ice cream. And both [say,] Happy holiday! Happy New Year! What is that? I dare to call it art and, moreover, a form of mythmaking.”⁷⁰ To which I would add Tertz's earlier metaphor of the twentieth century's cathedral-cum-prison.

69 Significantly, Epstein compares Siniavsky-Tertz's writing with Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1967), emphasizing that the latter work was published at the same time as Siniavsky was writing his seminal texts in Dubrovlag (1995: 91).

70 “Он берет железную тюремную кружку и вместо крема вводит туда сперму. Затем вскрывает себе вену и заливает мороженое вином. И оба – с праздником, с Новым годом. Осмелюсь спросить: что это такое? И осмелюсь ответить:

The equation of cathedral and prison is certainly a highly unusual instance of in-betweenness, as are the rather shocking in-betweens of cream and sperm, of blood and wine, although the latter suggests a metaphor of Christ's blood as wine during the Eucharist, most likely used parodically here. Tertz calls blood and sperm "the ultimate foundations of life" ("первооснова жизни") (246).⁷¹

And, finally, here is a very different story about Andrei Donatovich whose memory I cherish. In the late 1980s, after visiting a chateau outside Paris with him, his wife Maria Rozanova, and Alik Zholkovsky, we had lunch at a local restaurant. A little boy kept running up to our table and back, clearly eyeing Siniavsky, with his scraggly beard and eyes that point in different directions. Finally, the boy got his courage up and asked, *Bist du ein Zwerg?* ("Are you a gnome?"). Although Siniavsky did not know German, he understood the word *Zwerg* and smiled, nodding his head affirmatively, as if to say that he was, in fact, something in between a fairytale gnome and a human being. That day we had been talking about forest sprites (*leshie*) and house goblins (*domovye*): Andrei Donatovich believed in them.

Such were Siniavsky's very different personas.

искусство. Искусство и более того – в некотором роде мифотворчество" (Tertz/Siniavskii 2003: 246).

71 "‘Ia’ i ‘Oni’ (O krainikh formakh obscheniia v usloviakh odinochestva)" was first published in the Israeli journal *Vremia i my* (No. 13, 1976, 168–182).

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: Sasha Sokolov in the 1960s (photographer unknown, permission of the owner granted)

Fig. 2: Vasily Aksenov and Olga Matich discussing *Metropole* in 1978 (photo by Alex Albin, permission granted)

Fig. 3: Andrei Siniavsky speaking at the Third Wave Conference in 1981 (photo by Craig R. Dietz, permission granted)

All photos from the collection of Olga Matich

Polina Barskova

Siege Dialogues during the Cold War: Harrison E. Salisbury's *900 Days* and Its Sources¹

Abstract: This paper reflects on researching the papers of Harrison Salisbury housed at the Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Columbia University. An inquisitive and popular journalist, Salisbury spent nearly twenty years with the United Press (UP), much of it overseas, and was UP's foreign editor during the last two years of World War II. He was also the *The New York Times*' Moscow bureau chief from 1949–1954. This paper addresses his book *The 900 Days* (1969) that up to this day remains, in spite of its many mistakes and omissions, one of the richest accounts of the intellectual, cultural and emotional life in the city of disaster. Specifically, my inquiry is to figure out how Salisbury worked with his sources other than the Soviet published ones, how he sought information that allowed him to re/construct such a rich, controversial tapestry given the absence of information from behind the “Iron Curtain”. Discoveries of Salisbury's creative dialogues with Anatoly Darov and Mikhail Diakonov, and inclusion of their versions of the Siege into his book, widen our traditional understanding of tamizdat and open it towards new questions of genre.

Keywords: Anatoly Darov, Harrison Salisbury, Igor' Diakonov, Siege of Leningrad

This essay reflects on the research project that led me to explore the Harrison E. Salisbury Papers, currently housed at Columbia University's Rare Book and Manuscript Library.² Salisbury (1908–1993) was a brilliant, inquisitive and popular journalist, a maverick who experienced both success and failure as a writer. He spent nearly twenty years (1930–1948) working for the United

1 I would like to thank the Jordan Center for the Advanced Study of Russia at New York University for awarding me the grant that enabled me to work on this research project.

2 Hereafter, referred to as “HES Papers.”

Press (UP), much of it overseas, and was the UP's foreign editor during the last two years of the Second World War. He also worked as the Moscow bureau chief of the *New York Times* from 1949 to 1954. Salisbury constantly battled Soviet censorship, winning the Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting in 1955.³ He traveled worldwide, reporting from combat zones (for example, he was the first reporter to visit Hanoi during the Vietnam War) and writing in many genres (including novels, some of which were published), and on many regions and topics, including US-China relations. His central focus, however, was the Soviet Union.

Yet even this illustrious resume does not fully explain how the journalist Harrison Salisbury wrote a book about the Siege of Leningrad, *The 900 Days* (1969), that to this day, despite its many mistakes and omissions, remains, in my opinion, one of the richest accounts (certainly, in the West) of the intellectual, cultural and emotional life in the besieged city, in addition to bringing to light some of the darkest, most complex aspects and "secrets" of that historical turmoil.

Salisbury's forte lies in his attempt to look at the Siege through the lens of numerous individual experiences, behaviors, narratives, and ideologies, following many lives that intersected there and then, showing the historical event as a collision of individual cases and microhistories. *The 900 Days* is a collection of Siege stories that for the most part, although not exclusively, Salisbury found through meticulous research, both in the Soviet press and book publications. Salisbury is rather omnivorous in terms of his sources: he includes accounts by survivors from different social groups and professions. Most importantly for the present study, however, he engages with various genres and positions regarding the problematic divide between fiction and non-fiction. In addition to the accounts of official Soviet historians (for example, Pavlov 1958), Salisbury uses numerous memoirs, diaries and fictional accounts by the writers who found themselves in the city. Obviously, all of

3 After travelling through Siberia in the spring of 1954, Salisbury wrote a fourteen-part series, "Russia Re-Viewed," published in the *New York Times*, that was awarded the 1955 Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting. Although barred from the Soviet Union for five years after receiving the prize, Salisbury was able to tour Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, and Albania in 1957, reporting on the ravages of communism in Eastern Europe.

them, before they were published, were severely censored so that they would harmonize with the official version of the Siege as an event (per the official Soviet discourse) that displayed *the ultimate heroism of citizens and the responsibility of the authorities*. Salisbury himself spent enough time in the Soviet Union in the 1940s and then again in the early 1950s to understand the compromised nature of his official sources: “None of these histories is complete, and each seeks to suppress or overemphasize certain aspects of the Leningrad events. But by close comparison the general course of what happened can be established” (Salisbury 1969: 674).

Specifically, my research in the archives was focused on discovering how Salisbury worked with his non-published Soviet sources, how he sought out the information that enabled him to (re)construct such a rich, controversial tapestry given the radical restrictions on information behind the Iron Curtain. I approached the archival holdings connected to *The 900 Days* with these questions in mind. What I found there generously and intriguingly illuminated Salisbury’s method while also producing an unexpected discovery that adds a curious nuance to the present volume’s discussion of the possibilities of dialogue between the literature about traumatic Soviet history published in the West during the Cold War and its Soviet readership. Although, strictly speaking, Salisbury’s book cannot be described as tamizdat, some of the circumstances of its creation and reception might shed new light on how we understand the exchange of information between interpreters of Soviet history during the period.

Salisbury arrived in Leningrad from Moscow in 1944, soon after the Siege was lifted. In the Soviet capital, he had spent time with western journalists, Soviet glitterati, and risqué beauties most probably in the employ of the Soviet secret police.⁴ (One encounter with a woman from the third group resulted in Salisbury accidentally setting fire to his room at the Hotel Metropol: the bill that Moscow’s lushest hotel presented to the journalist is also preserved in the archives.) What Salisbury saw in Leningrad, the extent of its beauty and ruin (especially of the city’s once spectacular suburbs of Petrodvorets and Pushkin) astounded him, making him vow that one day

4 Salisbury’s archive contains a manuscript of his memoiristic text about his Russian love affair. For more details and analysis, see Kirschenbaum 2012: 67.

he would write a book about what had happened in the city in 1941–1944. He returned to the Soviet Union in 1949 (staying until 1953), beginning his research there, although this stay coincided with the events of the so-called Leningrad Affair (a murderous crackdown against Leningrad officials and intelligentsia by their powerful Moscow rivals, which took place between 1946 and 1953), which made researching the Siege even more trying, if not dangerous.⁵ During this same period, the Siege was the subject of an intense public debate, especially in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when some of the most revelatory accounts of the Siege were published.⁶ It took Salisbury over twenty-five years to research and write his book. At the outset, he did not speak Russian, but by the time he finished the book, he was fluent, as we can conclude from his correspondence.

Questioning the Siege: Salisbury and Anatoly Darov

Due to the ongoing Cold War, Salisbury obviously had no access to archival materials on the Siege of Leningrad itself, nor was he able to interview eyewitnesses extensively and openly. Instead, he primarily read and assessed whatever he could find that had been published about the Siege in the Soviet Union. (The archives contain exhaustive lists of his published sources, including ones not included in the finished book.) Given the limitations that the Soviet propaganda machine imposed on the subject, Salisbury's study would have been quite tendentious if he had used only ideologically vetted Soviet sources. Since Salisbury was far from naïve, however, and he needed to

5 Salisbury wrote another unusual text dealing with Leningrad history, *The Northern Palmyra Affair* (Harper and Brothers, 1962). It is a hybrid work, a memoir-cum-novel presenting the author's take on the Leningrad Affair. Salisbury combines historical facts with reality in a most whimsical way, for example, depicting the writer Zuskind as ostracized by the ideological authorities for his novella *The Hedgehog* (whose titular character was, allegedly, a pet of a Party boss that the latter killed and ate during the worst days of the Siege). This, supposedly, is an allusion to Mikhail Zoshchenko and his ill-fated story *Priklucheniia obez'iany* ("The Adventures of a Monkey," 1945).

6 E.g. Luknitsky 1964; Pantelev 1967.

calibrate his narrative of the events vis-à-vis both Soviet and Nazi ideological perspectives on the Siege, he devised a way of receiving information from the other side – that is, from Siege survivors who had “found themselves in the West.”⁷ Salisbury sought out Siege survivors and found his own way of interviewing them and, when possible, using their written accounts.⁸

Among these, one conversation proved to be of special significance and curiosity to Salisbury – his dialogue with the journalist and novelist Anatoly Darov (Dukhonin; 1920–1997). Darov’s perspective was of special interest to me since his novel *Blokada* (*The Siege*) had been published in Munich in 1946, and then in New York in 1964. Darov’s novel is a unique Siege text: it is the only work of Siege fiction we know of that was begun in situ during the events and was not subject to Soviet censorship during its creation or publication, unlike most other Siege novels (for example, those of Vera Ketlinskaya and Aleksandr Chakovsky). Darov spent the first winter of the Siege in Leningrad as a young journalism student, but during the spring of 1942, he was evacuated to the Caucasus, which was promptly occupied by the Nazi army. This was where the history of his novel began: Darov published sketches under the title “Leningradskii bloknot” (“Leningrad Notebook,” featuring excerpts from his future novel) in 1943 in *Novaia mysl’* (*New Thought*), a Russian newspaper published in Nikolaev, Ukraine, in Nazi-occupied territory. Studying the genesis of Darov’s text today is a rather trying, extraordinary endeavor: the reader is struck by the author’s desire to produce an authentic description of his difficult experiences, heavily interlarded with outright propaganda. In this case, the propaganda is not pro-Soviet but pro-Nazi. Not unexpectedly, one finds a hefty dose of anti-Semitic slurs in Darov’s sketches:

Leningrad sent more women to the front than Yids, of whom there was a huge number in the city. The Yids obviously did not share Stalin’s enthusiasm about the home guards. The well-fed, swarthy mugs of the sons

7 This was a popular bureaucratic euphemism used for designating people who, following the occupation of former Soviet territory by the German army, were relocated to the West during the period 1942–1945.

8 Apart from the exchange with Darov, the only other complete response to Salisbury’s “American” questionnaire contained in his papers was written by Albert Bold.

of Israel could be seen, as in peacetime, in the shops, cafes, cafeterias, theaters, and newsrooms. Many of them had “failed” to leave Leningrad on time.⁹

Из Ленинграда пошло на фронт больше женщин, чем жидов, которых в городе было великое множество. Жиды явно не разделяли упований Сталина на ополчение. Сытые, черномазые морды сынов Израиля можно было видеть, как и в мирное время, в магазинах, кафэ, столовых, театрах, редакциях газет. Но многие из них не успели удрать Ленинграда во-время.

(Din 1943a)

Understandably, while reworking these sketches, imbued with their uniquely problematic historical context, into a novel, Darov radically “cleansed” them, thus minimizing their propagandistic qualities. What we see in the novel republished in New York by Rausen Publishers in 1964 (the version that Salisbury read and used for his own book) strikes us as a peculiar and original text with its own paradoxical generic affiliations.

Darov’s text oscillates between historical fiction and non-fiction, gravitating towards the former. Although its protagonist the young journalist Dmitry evidently has much in common with his author, the novel does not describe one person’s experience but rather strives to present an epic panorama, a *sui generis* encyclopedia of life and culture under the Siege. Through the novel’s protagonist and his friends, the reader has the opportunity to glimpse food lines, cafeterias and cemeteries, factories and dormitories, the black market, and Party headquarters. In this journey (obviously modelled on Dante: the author plays with the structural device of the circle – the circle of the Siege) Darov attempts to break every taboo surrounding the Siege. He describes the black market, the privileges enjoyed by Party officials, sex between the powerful and the powerless, and the hunger-ravaged inhabitants

9 Curiously, Boris Ravdin (2017) suggests that journalists who wrote for the *okkupatsionnaia* (collaborationist) press used pseudonyms, among other reasons, to put distance between themselves and their texts, which were often produced under considerable political pressure.

of Leningrad, and he discusses perhaps the most terrifying and taboo topic, cannibalism.

Darov follows a chapter describing a horrific produce market (“The Hunger Market”) with a chapter entitled “Mertvye kormiat zhivyykh” (“The Dead Feed the Living”), dealing with the various rumors and narratives about cannibalism circulating in the city. According to Boris Ravdin, today’s leading specialist on the so-called *podnemetskaia pechat’* (the Russian-language pro-Nazi collaborationist press), a primary feature of its discourse was an extreme intensification of the war’s horrors (which sometimes, ironically, did not need to be exaggerated that much).¹⁰ Indeed, Darov saturates the chapter with horror by imagining the most gruesome rumors circulating in the city, presenting them as actual events happening to Dmitry and his friends, who barely escape the traps laid by the cannibals. This chapter was one of Salisbury’s central sources in his attempt to assess and understand cannibalism during the Siege. As he acknowledges, it is a problematic task: “Cannibalism is not a subject which Leningraders care to discuss publicly” (Salisbury 1969: 686). Curiously, Salisbury lifts entire passages from Darov’s chapter, thus invoking the above-mentioned strong trope of “the dead feeding the living.” Thus, what was originally conceived for a Nazi propaganda news sheet, eventually and in mitigated form made its way into a book by an American journalist who aimed to break through and away from ideological clichés, boundaries, and limitations. In Darov’s *Leningradskii bloknot* we read:

Stupefied by hunger, people gradually lost their human aspect. I didn’t have a family, but in how many families of my acquaintance was I forced to observe [...] the selfsame phenomenon: the complete atrophy of kindred sentiment. If one of the family members died, they were usually only too happy about it. After all, it was still possible to get bread using their [ration] card for a time. Once I met a woman I knew, a member of the intelligentsia. Maybe she was already mad, like so many people. I remember, vividly, the gleam of joy in her eyes as she told me about the deaths of her three children.

¹⁰ See Ravdin 2017.

“For several days now,” she said, “I have been getting bread on three cards.” [...]

“This is how the dead feed the living,” I thought.

But this was not the only way the dead fed the living: they also literally fed them with their bodies. More and more one would hear about cannibalism. And maybe those who at first were outraged by this rumor later ended up in the infamous Crosses prison. In February of 1942, it held over 35,000 inmates, nearly all of whom were cannibals, and many of whom were murderers. It housed up to 35,000 prisoners, and in February 1942 it was almost exclusively chockablock with cannibals, among whom there were quite a few murderers.

Отупевшие от голода люди постепенно теряли человеческий облик. У меня не было семьи. Но в скольких знакомых семьях мне пришлось наблюдать [...] одно явление: полную атрофию родственных чувств. Если умирал один из членов семьи, обычно были только рады этому. Ведь по его карточке некоторое время еще можно было получать хлеб. Однажды я встретил знакомую интеллигентную женщину. Может быть, она уже была безумна, как многие. Я помню, как сейчас, радостный блеск в ее глазах, когда она рассказывала мне о смерти своих трех детей.

– Вот уже несколько дней, – говорила она, – как я получаю хлеб на 3 карточки [...].

“Так мертвые кормят живых...,” – подумал я...

Но мертвые кормили живых не только таким образом, но и буквально... своим телом. Все чаще стало слышно о людоедстве. И кто знает, может быть те, кто ужаснулся первому такому слуху, впоследствии сами попали в знаменитую тюрьму “Кресты.” Она вмещала до 35 тысяч заключенных и в феврале 1942 года была переполнена почти исключительно людоедами, среди которых насчитывалось не мало убийц.

(Din 1943b)

In Darov’s 1964 novel we read:

And thus did the dead feed the living. A stray woman, a comrade in misery, had come to live with Ivanovna. The woman's children had died, too, but at the beginning of the Siege, and she did not like to recall them. Yet she spoke with great enthusiasm about the death of her grandfather and grandmother. They were no more, yet their ration cards were still there, she often repeated, and in her crazy eyes flickered the lights of the animal joy of being well fed. And who knows, maybe those who were horrified by the first rumors of cannibalism later would go to the stacks of corpses, axe or saw in hand, or found themselves in the Crosses prison, where cannibals who had eaten fresh human flesh were shot.

И так мертвые кормили живых. У Ивановны появилась откуда-то приблудившаяся женщина, подруга по несчастью. У нее тоже умерли дети, но давно, еще в начале блокады, и она не любит о них вспоминать. Зато с удовольствием рассказывает о смерти бабушки и дедушки: были бабушка и дедушка, а теперь их нет, а карточки ихние есть... часто повторяет она, и в безумных глазах ее дрожат огоньки звериной радости быть сытой... И кто знает: может быть те, кто ужаснулись первому слуху о людоедстве, сами потом приходили к штабелям трупов с топором или пилой в руках, или попали в Кресты, где расстреливали людоедов-свежатников.

(Darov 1964: 200)

Comparing these two versions, we see how Darov minimizes the propagandistic "inflation" of the atrocities, rendering the situation more believable and realistic. When we look at how Salisbury uses Darov's novel, we see him striving for even more objective narrative. In *The 900 Days* we read:

There was more than one way in which the dead might help the living to survive. The dead served the living through their ration cards. The cards were supposed to be invalid as soon as the holder died. There were strict penalties for not reporting the dead and not returning the cards. In practice no one turned in a ration card.

(Salisbury 1969: 555)

and:

Cannibals . . . Who were they? How many were they? [...] There was a case of which he had heard, for instance, the case of a mother, crazed for food. She lost her mind, went completely mad, killed her daughter and butchered the body. She ground up the flesh and made meat patties.

(Ibid.: 475)

In the novel, the events are told from the viewpoint of the character Dmitry, who evidently shares certain traits with his author, Darov, but is also fictionalized and thus open to various experiences. The story of the encounter with the cannibals is told from Dmitry's perspective, yet Salisbury chooses to invent a peculiar narrative hybrid: he retells the story as something that actually happened to Dmitry, (that is, to Darov's fictional character), a "friend" of Anatoly Darov, thus exempting it from the status of pure fiction and situating it in a peculiar limbo between fiction and fact.

Importantly, Salisbury did not stop at reading and quoting a literary source (that is, Darov's novel) but sought more information from its author: he wanted him to elucidate and confirm certain details. In 1966, when *The 900 Days* was being written, Salisbury contacted Darov, who by then was living and trying his luck in New York, interviewing him by means of the questionnaire that he sent far and wide to every person in the US who he thought might provide him with authentic information about the Siege of Leningrad. (All in all, not so many survivors were willing to volunteer this information.) Salisbury asked Darov, inter alia, questions about the weather in the city, the situation in the city with sex and alcohol consumption, and anti-Soviet moods among the populace, as well as, inevitably, the most difficult ones – about cannibalism. In the following letter, Salisbury focuses on the "cannibals episode" in Darov's novel:

I want to turn for a moment to your book and ask you about a striking incident which you describe there. This has to do with the encounter of the young man with the cannibals[.] I am wondering whether this is an incident that actually occurred or if this is drawn from your imagination?

Or did some similar incident occur which you have elaborated on for the purpose of the novel?

On this same grim subject, am I correct in my belief that cutlets which were sold in the market and which were made from human flesh were for the most part made from flesh that was cut from the frozen stacks of corpses which accumulated outside the cemeteries? Or were these made from flesh of persons killed by the kidnappers?

(Letter from Harrison Salisbury to Anatoly Darov, 7 January 1966, HES Papers, Box 185, Folder 9)

Darov promptly offered his strong yet non-sensationalist opinions as somebody *in the know*, as someone who had lived through the experience:

The encounter with the cannibals was a true incident, and I was its protagonist. I was not alone, however, but was with a young woman. She ran out and called for help from Red Army soldiers. Otherwise, you would not be reading this letter. [...] The rumors about cannibalism were not just rumors: one must believe them, but one need not exaggerate. [...] Of course there could have been cutlets made from murdered people ("fresh meat"), but how could they have been distinguished from frozen human flesh, except by taste?

Встреча с каннибалами – истинное происшествие, героем его был я сам, только не один, а с девушкой. Она выбежала и позвала на помощь красноармейцев, иначе Вы не читали бы этого письма. [...] Слухи о людоедстве были не только слухами, этому нужно верить, но не нужно и преувеличивать. [...] Котлеты из убитых (свежатины), конечно, могли быть, но как их отличить от мороженой мертвечины? Разве что по вкусу.

(Letter from Anatoly Darov to Harrison Salisbury, 15 January 1966, HES Papers, Box 185, Folder 9)

Salisbury chose to include in his book a peculiar *mélange* of quotations from Darov's novel and Darov's replies to the journalist's questionnaire, framed by Salisbury's own note of caution about the complexity of separating rumors

from real facts when it comes to cannibalism during the Siege, thus showing that he does not fully trust his own sources. In the following passage, Salisbury engages in a curious method for objectifying Darov's novelistic text:

Rumors of cannibalism – yes. Leningrad had been swept by rumors since autumn. Whether the rumors were true no one really knew. Anything could be true in these times[.] [...] Whether these tales were literally true was not so important. What was important was that Leningraders believed them to be true, and this added the culminating horror to their existence.

(Salisbury 1969: 555)

In his novel, Darov was very much “in the open” about his version of his experience (many Siege survivors who “found themselves in the West” after the Second World War were in no hurry to talk about their past trajectories): his ambition was to use Salisbury's help in finding an American publisher for his novel. Though this hope was never realized, Darov made the generous gesture of approving Salisbury's work by penning a lengthy review of Salisbury's book for the émigré newspaper *Novoe russkoe slovo* (*New Russian Word*) and thus validating it for Russophone readers. Curiously, we can see the correspondence and intertextual exchanges between the two men as gestures of mutual validation: while Salisbury “affirms” Darov's version of history by incorporating parts of the latter's novel into his book, Darov approves of Salisbury's version of history, which also happens to include Darov's own reading of it. Moreover, their dialogue produces a peculiar generic cross-pollination that attempts to redefine the boundaries of the Siege's difficult “truth”: building his narrative on Darov's evidence, Salisbury chooses to locate it in the realm of rumors, which are nearly impossible to either prove or deny. This version of reality generated its own atmosphere of problematic knowledge and affect in the afflicted as it starved, among the other things, for accurate information.

Darov's review of *The 900 Days* (1969) was indeed laudatory (it was entitled “Podvig o podvige” – “A Heroic Deed about a Heroic Deed”), although it also outlined such peculiarities as the book's massive, sometimes awkward scope and its almost chaotic chorus of different voices. In this sense, Salis-

bury's attempt was not unlike Darov's own work, and for good reason, as Darov writes in his review: "Today, a novel about the Siege is not possible; it should be an epic poem [*epos*] rather."¹¹ We should note that Salisbury's own book also met with a controversial reception in the US over its genre. Some reviewers argued that it was a work of historical fiction rather than a strict journalistic investigation:

He cannot allow a train to draw in without a hiss of steam and a slow final turn of the driving wheels. [...] [T]he reader begins to wonder which sensations were really felt and which Mr. Salisbury has imagined. Sometimes we seem to be reading a novel, though of course a good one.
(Taylor 1969)¹²

However, Darov made the much more bitter and challenging claim that, amid this choir, Salisbury "gave voice" to ideologically suspect agents and historical figures – for example, Molotov and Zhdanov, as well as to some unworthy chroniclers, such as Dmitry Pavlov (1958). Darov insists that the book has too few openly anti-communist opinions, which troubles him, although he nevertheless unwillingly acknowledges Salisbury's desire to be objective.

Darov's review curiously highlights Salisbury's main ambition: as an outsider and an observer, he sought to tell many different versions of the same event. His aim was to show it from different points of view, while Darov insisted that there could be "wrong" stories and "wrong" experiences not worthy of inclusion in the historical epic. Our research shows how difficult and delicate was Salisbury's balancing act in comprehending the Siege and navigating various ideological claims on it. He attempted to include in his mosaic of the Siege both the official Soviet viewpoint and viewpoints radically at odds with the Soviet perspective, checking them against each other and thus orchestrating a Siege shot through with ideology and ideologized memories, resounding in a peculiar, complex, and tenuous cacophony.

11 "По-настоящему современный роман о блокаде невозможен. Или эпопея, или статистика" (Darov 1969: 3).

12 Curiously, it was also Salisbury's literariness that prompted harsh criticism from his Soviet readers. See Khozin 1969.

Correcting Views of the Siege: Salisbury and “Alexei Fedorov”

Writing about the Siege while locked out of the Soviet archives led Salisbury to produce hundreds of pages of highly emotional and psychologically compelling prose and also to make numerous and quite impressive historical mistakes. The second part of my archival research account is the story of how an attempt was made to correct these mistakes.

While I came to the Harrison E. Salisbury Papers expecting to find his correspondence with Anatoly Darov, I left them having found something that I had not expected to find there. The story goes as follows: at the dusky end of another day in the archives, after looking at numerous lists of Salisbury’s published sources, various questionnaires he sent out in the US and the responses he received, and an unbelievable number of fascinating US reviews of his book and some Soviet ones (predictably, filled with indignation at his “filthy lies”), I found an intriguing notebook with a stained red cover.

It contained a page-by-page commentary, in neat handwritten English, to the first edition of Salisbury’s book, published in 1969. Gradually, while reading this commentary, I understood that I was reading something unusual and exciting: a commentary to Salisbury’s book written by someone with a thorough knowledge of the subject, by someone who had a subtle and personal understanding of Leningrad’s cultural life shortly before, during, and after the catastrophe. The notebook’s author had taken upon himself the task of suggesting corrections to Salisbury’s numerous factual mistakes, misnomers, and typos. More importantly, he offered his opinions about the events and figures Salisbury describes (and, no small matter, titillating gossip about Salisbury’s protagonists.) He also shared memories from his own life during the period, memories seemingly triggered by Salisbury’s text.

And when, in *The 900 Days*, he comes across information on Leningrad cultural figures whom he knew personally, he volunteers abundant information about them, for example:

p. 24. Pavel Luknitsky. This was an exceptionally interesting figure who deserves more notice. He was dark blond, not dark by the way. To a close circle Luknitsky was known as the author of funny anti-Stalinist satirical songs and he was a close friend of Akhmatova since 1925 when he still

hoped to become a poet. After his death a couple of years ago it appeared that he had been writing down every conversation he had with Akhmatova for forty years until her death; tens of thousands of pages of jotted down notes. No doubt he was also a poet – one of the hundreds who never published their verse.¹³

p. 111. Vissarion Sayanov: I've met him. Like many decent but not heroic Soviet writers he drank heavily, especially in later life.¹⁴

p. 433. Iosif Orbeli – Abgarovich not Abramovich; extremely hot tempered and unpredictable, famous as lover. Slovenly dressed and no regard to money at all. Could spend all his salary on somebody who needed it.¹⁵

p. 539. Olga Berggolts' husband Molchanov was her second husband, her first husband was Boris Kornilov who was shot as a British spy though he obviously was nothing of the sort. Soon Berggolts was also arrested. She was pregnant. But they beat the baby out of her. She was suddenly let out of prison at a moment when no one returned from there. Then she took to drink – and resumed to drinking after the Siege.¹⁶

By offering these juicy biographic and psychological details, the notebook's author wanted to add his knowledge of real life and real people in Leningrad to Salisbury's account. Salisbury's profiles of his protagonists were sometimes too bookish and sterile, often construed only from official accounts and their own self-representations. On the contrary, the visions and versions of the same people painted by Salisbury's commentator are much livelier, edgy and controversial, and infused with a unique sense of humor.

13 The page number refers to the pages where each character first appears in the 1969 edition of *The 900 Days*. Pavel Luknitsky (1902–1973) was a Leningrad writer, journalist, and memoirist.

14 Vissarion Saianov (1903–1959) was a Leningrad writer and literary functionary.

15 Iosif (Joseph) Orbeli (1887–1961) was an orientalist and the director of the Hermitage from 1934 to 1951, including during the Siege of Leningrad.

16 Olga Berggolts (Bergholz; 1910–1975) was a Leningrad poet, famous for her work on the radio during the Siege of Leningrad.

The images that emerge from the commentator's appendices to Salisbury's rewritings of the official published narratives generate a curious effect of complexity and spaciousness: while Salisbury writes from a distance and depicts his characters from afar, the author of the commentary observes these same characters close up. He sees them not only as heroes of the Siege epic, but also as drunkards, lovers, and sometimes even cowards. The impression made on the reader of the notebook "additions" is that of a peculiar dialogue between the American journalist and his Leningrad reader, who does not only passively register Salisbury's story but also strives to offer new, personal information, lacking in the book, and his own opinions.

Who wrote this commentary? How did he have access to all this information? What was his position in Leningrad? His commentary is written in rich, expressive, quirky, somewhat old-fashioned English (which initially reminded me of Vladimir Nabokov's highbrow, supremely literary "dialect"), and so at first I was led astray in my surmises of who the author could have been. I imagined it must have been somebody not unlike Darov, one of the many members of the intelligentsia who had survived the Siege and made it to the West after the winter of 1941–1942. While I was completely puzzled by the commentator's identity, the answer was suddenly revealed in the commentary itself. The author uncovers his identity and offers a striking explanation of his undertaking:

p. 527

Dear Mr. Salisbury,

[...]

[W]hen the time comes when a countryman of mine will be able to write a book of such scope as yours on the tragic 900 days, there will be no more eyewitnesses, and he won't be able to reconstruct so vivid a picture of these unparalleled events. Thus your book is destined to be a monument to our dead, more fine and more durable than the stone woman in Piskarevo cemetery. And there should be no inaccuracies in this book. Also a few additional touches might be added. This is why I am so bold as to write these notes which I am sending you in case you would like to use them in a new edition of your book. It deserves dozens of new editions – it is absolutely the best book that has been written in your country about

my countrymen. You have found out the essential about us – among other things that we are not divided into communists and anti-communists but into decent and not decent people. [...] As for me, I do not want to be anonymous to you. My name is Igor Diakonoff, I am a professor and Honorary Member of the American Oriental Society. But as I have said – the times have changed so if you find it possible (as I do hope) to use my notes in a new edition, please do not use my name, or give me the name of, say, Alexei Fedorov. It is the atmosphere of the 70s which makes me to write this letter to you as a note to p. 527 and not to begin with the letter. I am not a coward, there are some people, who can vouch for me. But I am cautious – of necessity. By the way, the “Posev” Russian translation of your book is absolutely incompetent.

(HES Papers, Box 336, Folder 10)

In the next file, I found an accompanying letter of explanation from the person who, it transpired, had delivered the notebook to Salisbury – Marvin Powell, a professor of ancient languages at Northern Illinois University:

As you are probably aware, your book on the blockade of Leningrad has been, is, and undoubtedly, will continue to be circulating widely in the Soviet Union, passing as books do, from hand to hand in paperback copies, a mute testimony of the passion of humanity for knowing (and perhaps also for picking the forbidden apple).

The notes that I am passing to you have been prepared by one of your admirers, a rather typical Leningrader in his devotion to his native city. I brought the notes out via diplomatic post. The author identifies himself in the course of his remarks, but I shall just say a word about who he is: Igor Diakonov is a professor in the AN (Academy of Sciences) of Leningrad and an internationally known orientalist and linguist.

I am sure that you, as an author and ipso facto, public figure, must receive quite a bit of correspondence, but Diakonov’s correspondence may be of some interest to you, and if you should wish to communicate with him via me, I shall be happy to pass on what you have via the grapevine.

Professor of Ancient Languages, NIU, Marvin Powell

(Letter from Marvin Powell to Harrison Salisbury, 5 December 1978, HES Papers, Box 336, Folder 10)

Not only did the notebook from the “fervent reader” (as Diakonov called himself later in their correspondence) reach its addressee, but it was gratefully received. Salisbury replied to Diakonov’s original message through the same channel:

Dear Igor Mikhailovich (if I may so address you),

I can think of no more exciting and moving New Year gift than your commentary and corrections. I shudder anew at my temerity in trying to write that book with my faulty Russian, abominable grammar, general lack of knowledge of Leningrad [...] I cannot tell you how my heart throbbed on that day, early in February 1944 when I got off the train on a very cold and lowering day in Leningrad and boarded a bus which took me up to the Nevsky Prospekt [...] To me Leningrad and its citizens are the heroes. I do not know how the city and its people survived – I do not think any other city could have survived. I know they were not all good people nor brave people nor perhaps even decent people but I admire them all and bow to you and all the others.

That my history is read in Leningrad I of course know. I get too many messages (second or third hand) not to know that. But seldom do I get an actual letter and never have I gotten a commentary which is really a marvelous book in itself like yours.

I am stirred by your marvelous work to think that I might go back to my publisher and see if he could put out a new and corrected edition. The errors have long appalled me. The Russian edition has even more errors[.] Maybe you have stimulated me to something. Very best to you!¹⁷

(Letter from Harrison Salisbury to Igor Diakonov, 9 January 1979, HES Papers, Box 337, Folder 11)

17 Curiously, Diakonov’s is not the only letter with corrections that Salisbury received from the Soviet Union – his papers at Columbia University also contain a three-page list of corrections from the physical chemist V. Goldansky.

It is no surprise that Diakonov dared to “suspend” his anonymity and reveal his identity to Salisbury. This had to be done not only to confirm the authenticity of his knowledge, but also because the story that he needed to tell in response to Salisbury’s text was deeply personal – it was the story of his Siege self and his own experience of the Siege. He reacts to Salisbury’s “prompts” as one would respond to mnemonic triggers. A new text thus emerges: a palimpsest in which Diakonov reconstructs his own version of events in response to Salisbury’s multi-character panorama, inscribing it in and over Salisbury’s text. For example, here is Diakonov’s own macabre yet almost elegant vignette about cannibalism in Leningrad:

p. 550. Here is another typical example for you. Borisov, a young professor of Semitic languages was dying of starvation in the cellars of Hermitage but was saved by his girl student who has shared with him her rations. When he got better, the two lovers went to visit their common teacher who lived at the Ismailovsky Prospect. When they entered the gateway to the yard – to kiss I suspect – they found a human head.

Though Diakonov spent only a couple of months in the besieged city before he went to the front (his military career eventually took him to Norway, where he had grown up and where he served as a military translator), he witnessed the famous evacuation of the Hermitage, directed by Josif Orbeli, the first months of merciless bombing and shelling, and the intense anxiety felt by the city’s inhabitants. It is these deeply personal impressions of what he witnessed and experienced that Diakonov wants to incorporate into Salisbury’s “book of the Siege fates”:

p. 243 “on August 15”

That was the day when the train consisting of goods cars, in one of which my mother, my wife, my little son went away to goodness knows where. [...] There were of course no toilets: you were supposed to jump off the car and into the ditch whenever the train stopped. [...] It took nearly ten days journey to a village near Sverdlovsk, the train barely escaped the German bombers in Mga, and the child was quite ill when the train ended...

p. 247. “on August 20”

On that day I rang up Yasha Babushkin¹⁸ and asked him to meet me at a nearby café at Nevsky. We sat over a cozy pre-war luncheon and spoke of the future. I think it is during that conversation that I found out that he was a Jew. We simply were not interested in these matters before WWII.

p. 345

The posts on the roofs of the Hermitage were established no later than late August. I have never seen anything more beautiful than the city as seen from the roof of the Winter Palace with its marble figures, black night and the clear reddish blue sky especially in the early hours of the morning.

Every time that Salisbury mentions something that is familiar to Diakonov, the latter has the urge to intervene. He is quick to add his own memories, actions, and perspectives – literally, as in this last entry, his point of view – to Salisbury’s multiplicity. Diakonov perceives *The 900 Days* as an open structure in which every survivor willing to talk deserves their own place, their own entries. When reading the book in the 1970s, Diakonov felt it to be the only venue for collecting and preserving records of the Siege for the objective reader.

The journalist and his attentive reader never met, although they exchanged a few letters with the help of Professor Powell and, later, Diakonov’s friend, the famous literary scholar Efim Etkind, a dissident who had been forced to emigrate to Paris. Moreover, their readerly encounter produced two publications. The second edition of *The 900 Days*, which came out in 1985, included many of Diakonov’s suggested corrections. Salisbury wrote about it to his pen pal with great excitement:

18 Yakov Babushkin (1913–1944) was a Leningrad journalist and head of literary and drama broadcasting at the Leningrad Radio Committee during the Siege of Leningrad.

The day which I have awaited for so long has finally come. “The 900 Days” have been reprinted and most – not all of the corrections you so kindly suggested to me so many years ago have been made.¹⁹

The corrected edition includes many of the suggested corrections of the factual mistakes but none of the commentaries. So, I am in your debt. I wish that all of the suggestions which you made could have been complied with but since it was being done cheaply I had to limit myself to corrections which could have been made within existing pages.

(Letter from Harrison Salisbury to Igor Diakonov, 15 August 1985, HES Papers, Box 337, Folder 11)

In several letters to Salisbury, Diakonov expressed the hope that the American journalist would include his memoirs and impressions about the Siege in further editions of the book. Since this never happened, Diakonov decided to write his own Siege narrative, in which he compiled his reactions to Salisbury’s text into a text of his own. In the Siege chapter of his *Kniga vospominanii* (*Book of Memoirs*, 1991), Diakonov takes many of the personal, memoiristic comments that he wrote in response to Salisbury’s narrative and creates his own version of the initial anxiety-ridden months of the Siege. The chapter includes accounts of his own work and observations of the evacuation of the Hermitage, of the desperate attempts by Leningraders to understand, despite a crucial lack of information, what their own and their city’s future might hold, of preparations for evacuations, and of Diakonov’s departure for the front and service as a military translator in Norway. In his memoirs, we “meet” characters, memories of whom were “prompted” and “refreshed” by Salisbury’s book: Orbeli, Babushkin, and Antonina Izergina.²⁰ Diakonov does not mention Salisbury as his *sui generis* muse, and the chapter on the Siege was part of a very different whole – the long, complicated life of a Soviet intelligentsia dignitary who had his own difficult battle and romance with the Soviet era.

19 Salisbury’s papers contain a list of suggested corrections for the publisher based on Diakonov’s suggestions.

20 Antonina Izergina (1906–1969) was an art scholar and Orbeli’s wife.

Conclusion: The Genres and Temporalities of “Fervent” Cross-Reading

Both these stories of relationships between readers and writers show us curious patterns of dialogue and exchange among authors, as well as complex and peculiar trajectories of influence and appropriation between their texts. Salisbury needs information from eyewitnesses of the Siege and thus includes Darov’s prose in his book, albeit *with considerable caution*. In his review, Darov acknowledges the value of Salisbury’s book to the émigré community. Darov and Salisbury use each other’s texts to add gravitas to their own versions of history, to convince their most immediate audiences.

Then, in Leningrad, a Soviet intellectual reads an American book about the Siege, which provokes him to add his version, his view of the events to the plethora of impressions found in *The 900 Days*: he wants to be part of this epic record, of its multitude of stories. Salisbury chooses to use Diakonov’s factual expertise to make his book more historically valid. In actuality, he uses his “fervent reader” (as Diakonov defined himself) as a fact checker, while leaving his correspondent’s observations, opinions, and experiences “outside” the book and thus compelling Diakonov to his own act of authorship.

We should pay heed to the historical time frame: 1943–1991. Darov’s text “starts” in 1943 (in response to the needs of the Nazi propaganda machine) as a series of journalistic sketches about the horrors of the Siege. Ironically, the ideological context necessitates that Darov devote significant space to the parts of the Siege story ousted from the Soviet version, enabling him to contradict it by focusing on the privileges and impotence of the authorities, and on cannibalism. These subjects bring Salisbury’s attention to Darov’s Siege novel, published in 1964. Salisbury uses Darov’s text as one of the non-Soviet bases of *The 900 Days*, which he desperately tries to make a non-biased account, free from propaganda, while suspecting, however, that most of his informants have their own ideological agendas.

After reading Salisbury’s book during the bleak years of the Stagnation, Igor Diakonov, an eyewitness of the Siege, a renowned public intellectual, and a brilliant scholar, decides that his only chance to facilitate publication of the complete and real story of the Siege is to smuggle his “corrections” and additions to Salisbury in a diplomatic pouch. For Diakonov, a significant

omission in *The 900 Days* is the absence of his own specific account. And yet, for Salisbury, Diakonov's perspective is less valuable than his first-hand knowledge of the Siege and the "facts" about Leningrad that he relates. At that point, Salisbury, preoccupied with new projects, is in greater need of Diakonov's fact-checking than of his memories, opinions and observations, yet Diakonov is ready to publish his own Siege story only in 1991. Darov's novel is published in Moscow in 2012.

Another curious aspect is the generic fluidity of the historical narration: Darov's sketches, written as authentic eyewitness accounts, are turned into fiction with the generous inclusion of supposedly autobiographical information. Darov's text becomes part of Salisbury's book, a journalistic investigation-cum-historical fiction based on accounts of the Siege produced in various genres. Salisbury attempts to correct this air of fictionality somewhat by interviewing the eyewitnesses whom he manages to find, as well as by checking their accounts against each other. In response to Salisbury's text, Diakonov publishes his own book of memoirs, a document of eyewitness. In addition to this rolling call and response between Siege accounts within rather conventional genres, Salisbury's research unearthed an additional and unique one: a text of response that emerged as a symptom of the eyewitnesses' desire to publicize in the West things that were unpublishable and invisible in the Soviet Union. What I find important here is the peculiar hybridity of Salisbury's text: he fuses both fictions and documents, connecting them with his own opinions; he finds a way to incorporate sources of varying degrees of authenticity and various genres. To borrow the term coined by Lydia Ginzburg in a difficult polemic with her OPOYAZ teachers, one can claim that Salisbury creates his own kind of "in-between prose," stretching the narrative space between the documented and the reconstructed, uniting document, memory and imagination, yet always paying critical attention to the agency of his storytellers.²¹ We could also claim that this whimsical hybrid is occasioned by the historical context – by the necessity of filling the gaps in historical knowledge with various kinds of texts of witness, however problematic they might be. In these circumstances, the creation in the West

21 On Ginzburg's version of "in-between" prose, which emerged from her effort to describe her own experience of the Siege, see van Buskirk 2016.

of a book about the Siege, without access to the archives, generates the gap the author had to fill with the inventiveness, open-mindedness and attunement towards his sources that became his own version of history.²²

Both stories – Salisbury’s interactions with Darov and Diakonov – can be regarded as peculiar collaborations, in which dialogue emerges between the texts as well as between the worldviews and experiences of their authors. To a significant degree, the intensity of the interchange was inspired by Salisbury’s need for Leningrad sources and informants in writing a history of the Siege from New York while also, curiously, inspiring them in turn. These puzzling collaborations of experiences and opinions also shed new light on our understanding of the phenomenon of tamizdat, with its peculiar ability to fill in the gaps of historical knowledge while also generating new controversies and misunderstandings, and thus widening the field of historical interpretation.

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22 Here I should mention another curious and important instance of written and oral testimonies interwoven with the opinions and often mitigating interjections of its editors: Ales’ Adamovich and Daniil Granin’s *Blokadnaia kniga* (*A Book of the Blockade*; 1977–1984).

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Yasha Klots

Lydia Chukovskaya's *Sofia Petrovna* Is *Going Under* and Abroad

Abstract: The essay treats Lydia Chukovskaya's novella *Spusk pod vodu* (*Going Under*) as an amplification of the historical context, subject matter, and setting of *Sofia Petrovna*, Chukovskaya's earlier and more acclaimed work of fiction. Reconstructing the history of the first publication and reception of *Going Under* abroad in 1972, the essay argues that the two works, set and written ten years apart, form a cycle: they are "indexical" to each other, and irreducible to the respective historical contexts that inform their subject matter. Through a close examination of *Going Under* vis-à-vis *Sofia Petrovna*, the essay dwells, in particular, on literary paradigms on both sides of the Soviet borders, situating gosizdat and tamizdat in a relationship of mutual complementarity, rather than binary opposition.

Keywords: tamizdat, Stalinism, censorship, translation, reception

Chukovskaya's *Sofia Petrovna* (1939–1940), the only known work of fiction that deals with the Great Terror not in hindsight, but in the immediate aftermath of the events described, survived Stalin's purges, the Siege of Leningrad, the war, and Stalin himself, as a manuscript that was too "dangerous to keep [...] in the drawer" ("держатъ ее в ящике письменного стола было рискованно") but which "would have been dishonorable to destroy" ("уничтожить [ее] было бы бесчестно"; Chukovskaya 1994: 1). In this manuscript, "society's unconsciousness and blindness" was given, in the author's words, "the most ordinary name: 'Sofia Petrovna'" ("Имя этому всеобщему бессознанию я дала зауряднейшее: 'Софья Петровна'; Chukovskaia 1997: 2, 540). Kept secret for over twenty years, *Sofia Petrovna* was released from the drawer in the wake of the Twenty-Second Party Congress in 1961. After being rejected by the Soviet literary establishment, it circulated in samizdat and was leaked abroad, where it was first brought out in two different versions,

and under different titles, in Paris and New York (Chukovskaia 1966a and 1966b), before finally seeing the light of day in Russia during perestroika (Chukovskaia 1988a).

Ten years after *Sofia Petrovna*, Chukovskaya reclaims her titular character's social myopia in her second novella, *Spusk pod vodu* (*Going Under*), whose female protagonist, a Soviet author and translator, revisits the year 1937 and verbalizes her past experiences in a manuscript she is secretly writing. Reading the two works as a cycle, this essay addresses the aspects of both novellas that go beyond Chukovskaya's incontestable historical achievement: daring "to name the torture chamber' in its presence" (Holmgren 1993: 44). It argues that, set and written a decade apart, the two works are "indexical" to each other and irreducible to the respective historical contexts that inform their subject matter, be it the Great Terror of the 1930s or Stalin's persecution of the Soviet intelligentsia and Jewry in the late 1940s. Moreover, the historical import of Chukovskaya's fiction brings home mainstream Soviet literary paradigms from the Thaw to the Brezhnev era, which Chukovskaya effectively undermines and departs from. Consequently, both *Sofia Petrovna* and *Going Under* were forced to go elsewhere, beyond the confines of the Soviet literary jurisdiction, to tamizdat. A parallel reading of the reception of Chukovskaya's fiction on either side of the Soviet borders enables us to see gosizdat and tamizdat in a relationship of mutual complementarity, rather than as a binary opposition, blurring the line between the two artificially demarcated fields of Russian literature at home and abroad.

Going Under is a (chrono)logical amplification of *Sofia Petrovna*'s historical subject matter, characters and setting. Like *Sofia Petrovna*, *Going Under* was written in immediate proximity to the events described, this time at the height of Stalin's post-war terror against so-called rootless cosmopolitans, or Soviet Jewry, and the intelligentsia at large, specifically, in February and March 1949, which constitutes its historical setting.¹ Like the manuscript of

1 Chukovskaya continued to work on *Going Under* through 1957. On December 3, 1957, she wrote to Leonid Pantelev from Dubulty, Latvia, that she had "indeed completed the novella (I have been writing it since 1949, two weeks at a time)" ("Повесть я в самом деле кончила (я пишу ее недельки по две в год с 49 г.)"). (Pantelev/Chukovskaia 2011: 119; hereafter, unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine). The same year, Pasternak's novel *Doctor Zhivago* was published in Italy.

Sofia Petrovna, Going Under also “existed for many years as a single copy I did not risk keeping at home. After the Twentieth Congress, I retyped it in four copies and ventured showing it to my friends.”² While Chukovskaya’s first work of fiction was largely completed during her stay in Detskoe Selo (Pushkin) in December 1939, *Going Under* is set ten years later in Maleevka, a resort for Soviet writers outside Moscow, fictionalized as Litvinovka. Thus, the historical suburb of Leningrad where Chukovskaya wrote *Sofia Petrovna* and the fictional setting of *Going Under* reflect one another and situate the two works between reality and fiction. The manuscripts of both works traveled abroad approximately twenty-five years after they were written, in 1939 and 1949, respectively: *Going Under* was published in New York in 1972, six years after *Sofia Petrovna*. Both works first saw the light of day in Russia the same year, 1988 (Chukovskaia 1988a and 1988b).

Like *Sofia Petrovna*, *Going Under* features a female protagonist, Nina Sergeevna, who had lost her husband in the Great Terror. But while *Sofia Petrovna* is a third-person account of the titular character’s gradual descent into madness, *Going Under* is made up of diary entries narrated in the first person. While working on a translation project throughout her stay in Litvinovka, the diary’s author undertakes nightly “plunges” (*spusk*) into the haunted space of her memory as she tries to make sense of the incomprehensible reality of the 1930s and commit it to paper. Her “going under” results in a manuscript which, once complete, is “self-published” as a novella inserted in one of the diary entries. In the course of the ten years since *Sofia Petrovna*, the heroine of *Going Under* has grown from an uncomprehending typist employed at a Soviet publishing house, unable to understand what had

The campaign against him, however, started years earlier and is reflected in *Going Under*. “I have seen enough of them in Maleevka, and have described them accurately” (“Достаточно я на них нагляделась в Малеевке, и они мною точно описаны”; Chukovskaia 1997: 2, 323; diary entry for October 28, 1958).

- 2 “[C]уществовала лишь в единственном экземпляре и хранилась вне дома. После XX съезда я переписала ее на машинке в четырех экземплярах и осмелилась показать друзьям” (Chukovskaia 1997: 2, 299). Akhmatova was one of the first readers of Chukovskaya’s newly written novella, although her initial response to *Going Under* on April 21, 1958, when she read it in Chukovskaya’s presence, was evidently more reserved than eighteen years earlier, when Akhmatova first read *Sofia Petrovna*. See *ibid.*: 299–303.

happened to her, her son, and society at large, into a cognizant writer, whose “going under,” in some sense, foreshadows underground Russian literature in the years to follow. The self-conscious yet equally forlorn Nina Sergeevna, in *Going Under*, comes to redeem the blindness and credulity of her historical predecessor, Sofia Petrovna.

While *Sofia Petrovna* plays the “gamut of nineteenth-century radical fiction and its socialist realist offspring” (Holmgren 1993: 192; see also Forrester 2008), if only halfway, *Going Under* wears no such mask. Instead of Sofia Petrovna’s attempted ascent to the ranks of socialist realist positive heroines, aborted overnight by the arrest of her son (the true positive hero), *Going Under* plunges the reader headlong into Nina Sergeevna’s visions of the Great Terror and late Stalinism. The opening sentence of *Sofia Petrovna* brackets the death of her husband outside the plot, since the protagonist herself does not believe it could actually be the source of her and her son’s later misfortunes: “After the death of her husband, Sofia Petrovna took a course in typing. She felt she simply had to acquire a profession” (Chukovskaya 1994: 3).³ Nina Sergeevna, conversely, keeps “going under” and down into the memory of her executed husband whom she is unable to forget. (The husbands of both protagonists were doctors.) While in her first work Chukovskaya is preoccupied with the obliteration of memory (at the end of the novella, Sofia Petrovna burns her son’s letter from prison), *Going Under* is about preserving memory in the act of writing and, thereby, a commentary on Soviet literature and its institutions. However, with roots deep in its soil, the novella could only shoot aboveground elsewhere, that is, abroad, thus mapping its idea and plot onto the story of its first publication in tamizdat.

Not entirely unlike Chukovskaya’s own manuscript of *Sofia Petrovna*, the manuscript that Nina Sergeevna is secretly writing in *Going Under* is conceived of as a monument to the victims of Stalinism, although it would remain unbuilt (unpublished) in Chukovskaya’s home country for decades. In the early 1960s, Chukovskaya believed that *Sofia Petrovna* could actually be published in Russia – not only because the Thaw years seemed ripe for it, but also because Sofia Petrovna was equipped with certain pseudo so-

3 “После смерти мужа Софья Петровна поступила на курсы машинописи. Надо было непременно приобрести профессию” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 13).

cialist-realist attributes, although these proved far from sufficient.⁴ Nina Sergeevna's downward trajectory in *Going Under*, however, left no room for such hopes: unlike *Sofia Petrovna*, *Going Under*, to the best of our knowledge, was never submitted for publication at home until perestroika. And while the tamizdat publication of *Sofia Petrovna* in 1966 did not seem to incriminate Chukovskaya directly (at least not for a while), it was the publication of *Going Under* in 1972 in New York (Chukovskaia 1972) that earned her total ostracism at the hands of the official literary world at home, making her name unmentionable even in publications about her father, Kornei Chukovsky, the famous Soviet critic, translator, and children's author, who had died three years earlier, in 1969.⁵ Chukovskaya's last appearance in print in the Soviet Union was her monograph on Herzen's *Byloe i dumy* (*My Past and Thoughts*; Chukovskaia 1966c). It was published in Moscow months after the show trial of Andrei Siniavsky and Yuly Daniel' and the same year as *Sofia Petrovna* was published in tamizdat. Ironically, the monograph was devoted to the writer whose publishing efforts in Europe a century earlier served as a platform for his likeminded brethren in Russia to bypass tsarist censorship and print their works abroad. Evidently, in her work on Herzen, Chukovskaya was "implicitly justifying the strategy that she has used in her own two novels" (Klimoff 1978: xxvi).

Completed in 1957, *Going Under* found its way to the West years later and was published in March 1972. The manuscript was sent via the diplomatic pouch to England, where it was received by Peter Norman, a British Slavist, "the most beautiful Englishman" ("самый красивый англичанин"), as Akhmatova once called him (Akhmatova 1996: 441), whom Chukovskaya first met in Peredelkino in 1959 but became friends with later, after Akhmatova's death (Kudrova 1999: 67). After visiting Chukovskaya in 1967, Norman recalled:

4 For details on the failed attempts to publish *Sofia Petrovna* in gosizdat, see Chukovskaia 1979 and 2014.

5 Chukovskaya's memoirs of her father, scheduled at the time for publication in Russia, were first printed abroad ten years later (Chukovskaia 1983 and Chukovskaya 1988).

Some time later, a large envelope arrived in Golders Green from Austria. On behalf of Lydia Korneevna, a diplomat had sent me the manuscript of her book *Going Under*, with the request to help get it published and translate it into English. [...] I forwarded the manuscript to the US, and Chekhov Publishing House brought out *Going Under* in Russian.

Спустя некоторое время в Голдерс-Грин пришел по почте большой конверт из Австрии. Один из дипломатов переслал мне от Лидии Корнеевны рукопись ее книги “Спуск под воду” – с просьбой помочь в издании и перевести на английский. [...] Переслал рукопись в Соединенные Штаты, и “Спуск под воду” появился в издательстве Чехова по-русски.

(Kudrova 1999: 70)⁶

The publication of *Going Under*, according to Norman, was thus authorized, although the choice of publisher for the Russian edition might not have been discussed with the author. The consequences, however, soon became apparent. On October 8, 1972, Chukovskaya found out that the publication of her memoirs of her father had been suspended. Her conversation with Yuri Strehnin, then secretary of the Moscow Organization of Soviet Writers, was “nothing but a downright interrogation” (“форменный допрос, ничто иное”; Chukovskaia 1979: 71), despite his politeness, bringing to mind Chukovskaya’s confrontation with the editor of the Soviet journal *Sibirskie Ogni* Viktor Lavrentiev ten years earlier, when she had still hoped to see *Sofia Petrovna* published in Russia (for a retelling of the episode, see Chukovskaia 1997: 2, 373–374). Strehnin’s “police questions” (“полицейские вопросы”) included: “How did *Going Under* end up in America? Did I show or offer it to anybody for publication here? Why is there nothing light in it? Why does it speak disrespectfully of the army [...]? Why does it say that anti-Semi-

6 By 1972, Chekhov Publishing House, spearheaded by Max Hayward, had brought out, among other titles, Brodsky’s second collection of poetry *Ostanovka v pustyne* (*A Halt in the Desert*) and Nadezhda Mandelshtam’s first book of memoirs (*Vospominaniia*), both published in 1970. Hayward’s Chekhov Publishing House is not to be confused with the old émigré press of the same name, which was active in New York between 1952 and 1956.

tism was imposed from above? Why is there nothing light in it, but only the worst of the worst?"⁷ As seems to have been especially common that year, Strekhnin suggested, between the lines, that Chukovskaya place an "indignant letter" in *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, in other words, a renunciation of her publication in tamizdat: "Don't you understand that your book is being used by the enemy?"⁸ Chukovskaya replied that while she didn't know how her work had ended up in the West, she was glad that it had: "At least it is not going to vanish" ("По крайней мере не пропадет"; Chukovskaia 2015: 275). And instead of renouncing its publication abroad, she asked on what basis Chekhov Publishing House was referred to as "the enemy."

The English translation of *Spusk pod vodu* was published in the middle of the summer of 1972, four months after the Russian edition (Chukovskaia 1972).⁹ The translator was identified as "Peter M. Weston," but the translation had, in fact, been done by Norman:

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- 7 "Как 'Спуск' попал в Америку [?] Показывала ли я здесь, предлагала ли кому-нибудь эту повесть? Почему в повести нет ничего светлого? Почему неуважительно говорится об ополчении [...]. Почему антисемитизм насаждался сверху? Почему нет ничего светлого? Все только худое?" (Chukovskaia 2015: 274–275).
- 8 "Неужели Вы не понимаете, что Вашу книгу используют враги [?]" (Chukovskaia 2015: 275). In 1972, *Literaturnaia Gazeta* seems to have broken the record for open letters by Soviet writers protesting publications of their work abroad. The protesters included Bulat Okudzhava and Anatoly Gladilin (on November 29, 1972), Arkady and Boris Strugatsky (on December 13, 1972) and Varlam Shalamov (on February 23, 1972). As an example, Strekhnin invoked a similar letter by Aleksandr Tvardovsky, who had contested the pirate publication of his "Vasilii Terkin na tom svete" ("Vasily Terkin in the Otherworld") in Munich almost ten years earlier (in *Mosty*, No. 10 (1963), 129–144). Accordingly, 1972 saw a visible upsurge in tamizdat publications of contraband manuscripts from the Soviet Union. Apart from Chukovskaya's *Going Under*, they included, among others, Anatoly Gladilin's *Prognoz na zavtra* (*Forecast for Tomorrow*), Boris and Arkady Strugatsky's novels *Ulitka na sklone* (*Snail on the Slope*) and *Gadkie lebedi* (*Ugly Swans*), and Alexander Galich's *Pokolenie obrechennykh* (*Generation of the Doomed*), all published in Frankfurt-am-Main by Posev, as well as Andrei Platonov's *Chevengur* and Nadezhda Mandelstam's *Vtoraia kniga* (*Hope Abandoned*), published by YMCA Press, and Petr Yakir's *Detstvo v tiur'me* (*Childhood in Prison*), published by MacMillan.
- 9 See Chukovskaya's diary entry for July 15, 1972, which references the English translation (Chukovskaia 2015: 272). On August 20, 1972, her daughter Elena (Liusha) heard it announced on the radio, and over the next few days Chukovskaya tuned in

I was apprehensive at the time to use my own name, and so the translator was camouflaged under the pseudonym P. Winster [sic]. I had to be cautious, because I still wanted to travel to the Soviet Union more than once, and I remembered how the Soviet consulate in London had already denied my visa once...¹⁰

Я поостерегся тогда ставить собственное имя, и переводчик был скрыт под псевдонимом П. Уинстер. Мне приходилось быть осторожным, потому что я хотел еще неоднократно побывать в Советском Союзе – и помнил, как в советском консульстве в Лондоне мне уже отказывали в визе...

(Kudrova 1999: 70)

Norman's precautions, however, proved in vain: he was not issued a visa to Russia for the next twenty years. Still, he made sure that Chukovskaya received both the Russian and English editions, although "for a long time she did not know that P. Winster was actually me" ("долгое время она не знала, что П. Уинстер – это я"; Kudrova 1999: 70). The next time Norman was able to visit Moscow and see Chukovskaya was in 1988, the year that both of her novellas were finally published in Russia under one cover (Chukovskaia 1988b).¹¹

to three BBC broadcasts devoted to the English translation of *Going Under*: "The reviews are at a very low level of comprehension. My book is about the word, but there is not a word about that. [...] The overall score: [it is] worse than 'Requiem' and Nadezhda Mandelshtam's memoirs. But why must it be compared to the 'Poem' and the memoirs? This is extremely silly" ("Рецензии на очень низком уровне понимания. Книга моя – о слове; об этом – ни слова. [...] ниже 'Реквиема' и мемуаров Над[ежды] Мандельштам. А почему повесть надо сравнивать с 'Поэмой' и мемуарами? Глупо до чрезвычайности." – Chukovskaia 2015: 272–273).

10 It is unclear whether "P. Winster," instead of "Weston," is Norman's own typo or was made by Irma Kudrova, the editor of his memoirs in Russian translation.

11 A copy of this edition, inscribed to Norman and reproduced in his memoirs, reveals that as late as 1988 Chukovskaya still did not know that, sixteen years earlier, he had translated *Going Under*. The inscription reads: "Dear Peter! Please be healthy so as to translate *Going Under* for me" ("Дорогой Питер! Извольте быть здоровы, чтобы перевести для меня 'Спуск под воду'." – Kudrova 1999: 69).

Long before then, however, *Going Under* had been read by western audiences. Symptomatically, Mikhail Koriakov, a columnist for the Russian émigré newspaper *Novoe Russkoe Slovo* in New York, traced the novella back to Akhmatova's *Requiem*, which since its first publication in Munich in 1963 had served as the ultimate reference point for other Soviet women's writings on the subject of Stalinism. The manuscript Nina Sergeevna secretly writes in Litvinovka was interpreted by Koriakov as her (and Chukovskaya's) "answer" to the paramount question once whispered by "a woman with blue lips" ("женщина с голубыми губами") to Akhmatova in a line outside the Crosses prison in Leningrad in the 1930s: "Can you describe this?" ("А это вы можете описать?"; Akhmatova 1963: 8). In *Requiem*, Akhmatova answered in the affirmative. "Lydia Chukovskaya," Koriakov wrote, "could give the same answer: the story about the prison line is included in her work as an inserted novella."¹² The "inserted novella" was indeed what Akhmatova liked most of all about *Going Under* when she first read it in April 1958.¹³ While praising Chukovskaya for her descriptions of the Russian countryside, which reminded the émigré critic of his own visit to Tolstoy's Yasnaia Poliana, Koriakov claimed that no reader would be able to skip these "pages about nature," which "are so beautifully written, so well woven into the fabric of the novella that it seems the work is indeed 'about nature.'"¹⁴ It was true that Chukovskaya had quoted Tolstoy in the epigraph to *Going Under*: "A man's

12 "Так же могла ответить и Лидия Чуковская, – рассказ о тюремной очереди входит в ее повесть, как вставная новелла" (Koriakov 1972).

13 Cf.: "She likes everything about the street lights. Everything after it is better than what comes before" ("Нравится все фонарное. То, что после фонарного, лучше, чем то, что до"; Chukovskaia 1997: 2, 301). In Chukovskaya's manuscript, the inserted text was originally titled "Fonari na mostu" ("Street Lights on the Bridge"), but "in the American edition," as the author clarified, the title "was removed by me" ("Впоследствии заглавие 'Фонари на мосту' в американском издании было уничтожено мною"; *ibid.*: 301). In later editions of *Going Under*, Nina's inserted novella was printed as "Bez nazvaniia" ("Untitled").

14 "У некоторых читателей вошло в привычку пропускать страницы 'про природу', но я убежден, что они не смогут этого сделать при чтении повести Лидии Чуковской, – настолько эти страницы прекрасно написаны, настолько вотканы они во всю ткань повести, что кажется, будто это и есть повесть 'про природу'" (Koriakov 1972).

integrity is evident from his attitude to the word.”¹⁵ But it was hardly Yasnaia Poliana’s idyllic landscape that had motivated her choice of the epigraph; rather, it was Tolstoy’s “attitude to the word.” As for the original Russian title, *Spusk pod vodu* (literally, “going under water”), Koriakov, from the other shore of the Atlantic, wrote about Russia as “a gigantic ocean”: “I think that no matter how much waste, filth and rot floats on the surface, there is still some mysterious glow deep down in its depths.”¹⁶ These are the depths that Nina Sergeevna hopes to reach as she keeps “going under.”

Whether because a writer’s debut work is usually viewed more favorably or because *Going Under*, although written earlier, came out in tamizdat when revelations about Stalinism no longer produced such a sensation in the West as they had in the 1960s, the English translation of Chukovskaya’s second novella did not sit well with Anglophone critics.¹⁷ One of them concluded that *Sofia Petrovna* (or rather, *The Deserted House*, as it was titled in English)¹⁸

15 “Нравственность человека видна в его отношении к слову” (Tolstoi 1957: 41, 345).

16 “Россия – большой океан, и мне почему-то думается, что сколько бы мусора, грязи и гнили ни плавало на поверхности, есть все же какое-то таинственное свечение в глубине” (Koriakov 1972). In the postscriptum to his review, Koriakov lashes out at the editors of Chekhov Publishing House for their “tasteless” (“безвкусная”) and otherwise redundant note about Chukovskaya, her father, and the novella’s historical setting: “After all, the book has not been published for Paraguayans!” (“Не для парaguayцев же каких-нибудь выпущена эта книга!”) Evidently, by “Paraguayans” Koriakov means Chekhov’s non-Russian co-founders, Max Hayward and Edward Kline. Two years earlier, Koriakov had attacked them for publishing “ignorant notes by some unknown person” (“безграмотные заметки какого-то анонима”) as the preface to Brodsky’s *Ostanovka v pustyne* (New York: Chekhov Publishing House, 1970). In fact, the preface had been written by Anatoly Naiman and edited by Edward Kline. “We have never yet witnessed such a desecration of Russian poetry and of Chekhov’s name” (“Такого надругательства над русской поэзией – и над именем Чехова – мы еще не видавали”), wrote Koriakov, enraged by the “encroachment” on Chekhov’s sacred name by trespassing “Paraguayans” (Koriakov 1970).

17 One exception was an unsigned review in the *New York Times* (October 17, 1976), which argued that *Going Under* “has not just hit on a ‘theme’ with built-in resonance, horror, moment; a real literary talent is at work, artistically illuminating a virtually incomprehensible experience.”

18 Early translations of *Sofia Petrovna* into foreign languages were made from its first edition, which came out in Paris under the title *Opustelyi dom* (Chukovskaia

“was a better book than *Going Under*, which is written in the first person and reads less like a novel than a chapter of autobiography.” While *The Deserted House* (Chukovskaya 1967) was “beautifully translated by Aline Werth,” *Going Under* was “clumsily translated and supplied with a few unhelpful notes, and also carelessly printed” (“Down into the Past” 1972). Whether the notes were helpful or not is a moot point, but this same reviewer identified Chukovskaya as Kornei Chukovsky’s “adopted daughter” [sic], while claiming that her text “depends closely on atmosphere and tone of a Chekhovian kind.”¹⁹ One classic Russian writer, Tolstoy (in Koriakov’s review), is easily replaced by another, Chekhov, with only Dostoevsky perhaps still missing to make the picture complete in terms of the West’s pantheon of Russian literature.²⁰ Little did it matter that both Chukovskaya’s works of fiction were inextricably rooted in Soviet reality, rather than in the pre-revolutionary period, not to mention that her second novella was written as a response, if not a “sequel,” to her first.

The American writer Anatole Broyard (1976), on the other hand, went so far as to dismiss *Going Under* as “a matter of literary politics,” a work that was “dull, stodgy, amateurish and almost wholly bereft of ideas.” Confessing that he had not read Chukovskaya’s first book, Broyard makes it clear that he was not familiar with the style of state-sponsored campaigns against writers in Russia, either. Otherwise his review would not have echoed almost verbatim the notorious invective against Pasternak from 1958 (“I have not read

1966b), although *Sofia Petrovna* also appeared the same year in New York under its original title (Chukovskaia 1966a). Apart from the title, intended by the Parisian publisher as a tribute to Akhmatova’s *Requiem* and, of course, as a way to increase the book’s sales, the names of the titular heroine and some other characters were also changed in the first Russian edition and, respectively, in the translations. Sofia Petrovna became “Olga Petrovna,” for example.

19 It is unlikely that, by referring to the “Chekhovian” tone of *Going Under*, the critic could have had in mind Chekhov Publishing House, which had brought out the Russian original.

20 A fleeting reference to Dostoevsky is nevertheless present in the English review of *The Deserted House*, in which Chukovskaya’s earlier novella is referred to as “a document, a note from underground” (Maloff 1967).

Pasternak, but..."; "Я Пастернака не читал, но...").²¹ "I have not read 'The Deserted House,'" Broyard wrote, yet "it cannot have been a good book. If it had been, some trace of its competence would have shown itself in this one. What we have here is an example of literary politics: the praising of a novel for its 'message,' its 'honesty,' its 'courage,' as if these were esthetic criteria." Understandably allergic to the premise that "[i]f you are a freedom fighter, all is forgiven," Broyard claimed that Chukovskaya "sounds as if she has been brainwashed [and] totally ignorant of the advances modern fiction has made – in fact, she writes as if she were trying to reconstruct a theory of the novel out of the most antiquated and sentimental English models." Invoking the near-impenetrable wall between Russian writers and their peers abroad throughout the Soviet period, Broyard is not entirely wrong to assume that "[p]erhaps that is all she is allowed to read of Western literature," that the "inadvertent poverty of the author's style is more poignant evidence of alienation than her story of political repression." But Broyard's own vision of Soviet literature was, evidently, just as limited. True, it was hard to make out from Brooklyn and Greenwich Village, where Broyard made his career (see Gates 1996), that *Going Under* was set not "in the Russian-controlled sector of Finland," but outside Moscow, where Nina Sergeevna and other Soviet writers enjoy "a luxurious free vacation conferred by a grateful government," and it was certainly even harder to grasp just "how these writers qualify for this sort of V.I.P. treatment if they are not more securely established." Unlike Koriakov and other Russian émigré critics, who cherished Chukovskaya's work for its "pages about nature,"²² Broyard dismisses the protagonist's "communing with nature" as "a pathetic fallacy," and Chukovskaya's "recur-

21 The phrase was uttered by Anatoly Safonov, two-time laureate of the Stalin Prize for Literature and Art, who used it at the meeting of Soviet writers in Moscow on October 31, 1958, at which Pasternak was unanimously expelled from their ranks. See *Novyi Zhurnal* 83 (1966), 185–227; the first part of "Sofia Petrovna" appeared in the same issue of the journal. Chukovskaya was subjected to a similar procedure twelve years after Pasternak. This invective was also applied to Brodsky, as well as to Siniavsky and Daniel'.

22 A similarly nostalgic sentiment is voiced in another pseudonymous review of *Spusk pod vodu* in the same émigré newspaper. See E.B. 1972.

ring weather report” as “the only ‘technical’ trick in the author’s repertory.”²³ Having completely misread *Going Under*, Broyard was right about one thing: notwithstanding its political message, it was a work about Soviet literature and Soviet writers.

The publication of *Going Under* in 1972 took place when tamizdat and the Russian diaspora were gradually being rejuvenated by new arrivals from the USSR, who brought with them not only new manuscripts, but also a more intimate familiarity with Soviet history, literature, and even geography than the older generation of émigrés could afford, having left Russia in the 1920s (the First Wave) or during the war (the Second Wave). Unlike Broyard, who assumed that *Going Under* was set “in the Russian-controlled sector of Finland,” or Koriakov, who gazed at his native Russia from across the Atlantic as at a “gigantic ocean,” Andrei Klenov (born Aron Kupershtok), a Soviet-Jewish poet and novelist who emigrated to Israel and then to New York in 1973, was the first reader to point to Maleevka as the actual setting of *Going Under*. Himself a member of the Soviet Writers’ Union before emigration, Klenov had “often stayed” in Maleevka, particularly in February 1949:

I arrived before breakfast and immediately saw many good people in the cafeteria, including Mikhail Prishvin [...]. I sat down at an empty spot, looked around, and soon realized that a tragedy had taken place in the

23 Broyard’s review was occasioned by the second printing of *Going Under* in 1976. On November 2, 1976, Chukovskaya heard his review broadcast in Russian translation on the Voice of America: “I was lying in bed listening to the radio [...]. And suddenly I hear right above my ear, ‘Lydia Korneevna Chukovskaya.’ It turns out that *Going Under* has been published in the US and the Voice is broadcasting a review from the *New York Times*. Of course, I immediately forgot the name of the publishing house and the translator. Then I heard that the novella allegedly takes place in the Russian part of Finland. Enraged, I turned off the radio... Apparently, it is the ‘Finnish houses’ that confuse them[.]” (“Лежала я уже в постели, слушала радио [...]. И вдруг слышу по радио просто над ухом ‘Лидия Корнеевна Чуковская.’ Оказывается, в Америке вышел ‘Спуск’ и ‘Голос’ передает рецензию из ‘New York Times’. Конечно, название издательства, фамилию переводчика я мгновенно забыла. Дальше я услышала, будто действие происходит в русской части Финляндии. Тут я в бешенстве выключила приемник... Оказывается, их сбивает с толку ‘финский домик.’” – Chukovskaia 2015: 292–229).

house – the atmosphere in the cafeteria was depressed. Sure enough, I found out right away that one of the best Jewish poets, Samuil Galkin, a charming and handsome man to boot, had been arrested there that night.

Я приехал к завтраку и в столовой сразу увидел много хороших людей, в том числе Михаила Пришвина [...]. Я сел за свободное место, огляделся и очень скоро понял, что в доме стряслась беда – настроение в столовой было очень подавленное. И я сразу же, конечно, узнал, что ночью здесь арестовали одного из лучших еврейских поэтов Самуила Галкина – обаятельного человека и красивого при том.

(Klenov 1974)

While Prishvin, one of the Maleevka old-timers, is absent from the fictional plot of *Going Under* (except perhaps in the “pages about nature” that his celebrated portrayals of the Russian countryside could have inspired),²⁴ Samuil Galkin (Shmuel Halkin, 1897–1960) serves as the prototype for the Yiddish poet Veksler, one of the characters of *Going Under*, whom Nina Sergeevna, on a stroll through Litvinovka, first sees through a window at his desk wearing military decorations. “He fought here,” her companion the prose writer Nikolai Bilibin explains, “they were driving the Germans out of Bykovo”

24 Cf. the beginning of Prishvin’s short story “Prazdnik” (“A Holiday”), first published in *Literaturnaiia gazeta* on May 1, 1941: “I confess that the words ‘House of Creative Work’ [*Dom tvorchestva*] (Maleevka) used to seem ridiculous to me. I had not thought that creativity and institutions were compatible notions. But when I found myself in Maleevka, had a meal with everybody else, had a chat, read a bit, played billiard, and wrote something or other, my notion of the House of Creative Work changed. It turned out it was not a matter of words, but of the work itself: everyone here works great and meets each other at ease. Nowhere did I hear writers converse with each other so freely and soulfully as in Maleevka.” (“Признаюсь теперь, что слышать слова ‘Дом творчества’ (Малеевка) мне было смешно, мне казалось, что учреждение и творчество понятия несовместимые. Но когда я сам попал в эту Малеевку, вместе со всеми поел, поболтал, почитал, поиграл на бильярде и сам написал кое-что, то мое представление о Доме творчества переменилось: оказалось, не в словах дело, а в самой работе: тут все отлично работают и знакомятся друг с другом непринужденно. Нигде у писателей, кроме как в Малеевке, не слышал я таких свободных душевных разговоров.” – Prishvin 1983: 5, 244).

(“Он здесь воевал, немцев выбивал из Быкова”; Chukovskaia 1972: 25). Later, Nina Sergeevna asks Veksler to recite his poetry to her in Yiddish, a language that “always seemed ugly to me” (“всегда казавшийся мне безобразным”; *ibid.*: 48), then retell the same poems in his own words in Russian (a language that, Veksler admits, he does not know well), and finally read the poetic translations, which Veksler hopes to see published soon in the literary journals *Novyi Mir* and *Znamia*. Nina Sergeevna, a translator herself, finds the Russian translations of Veksler’s Yiddish poems inadequate to the original: “Oh, how ugly our language can be, how harshly words can be thrust into lines! How unwilling they may be to stand side by side! They seem to want to stick out in all directions!” (Chukovskaia 1972: 50).²⁵ One of his poems about the war in particular –

about the night of a commanding officer, a communist, who had to send into battle at dawn the next morning eighteen-year-olds just arrived at the front [while] somewhere on another sector of the front another commanding officer, just as advanced in years and a communist like himself, would send into battle his own eighteen-year-old son on the very same morning.

(Chukovskaia 1972: 49)

о ночи командира, коммуниста, который наутро, чуть рассветет, должен послать в бой восемнадцатилетних, только что прибывших на фронт. Он знает, что где-то, на другом участке фронта, другой командир – такой же пожилой человек, коммунист, как и он сам, – в это же утро пошлет в бой его восемнадцатилетнего сына...

(Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 112)

– may have been modeled on Galkin’s book of war poems, published in Moscow in 1945 (Halkin 1945). The book was brought out by the publishing house Der Emes, named after the eponymous Jewish newspaper founded in 1918

25 “О, каким, оказывается, бывает некрасивым наш язык, как жестко напиханы в строки слова, как им не хочется стоять рядом! торчат в разные стороны!” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 113).

under the auspices of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. In Yiddish, “emes” means “truth,” echoing the title of the main Soviet newspaper, *Pravda*. Unlike the newspaper *Der Emes*, which was liquidated in 1939, the publishing house survived as an organ of non-Russian gosizdat until the late 1940s.

There is no such poem in Galkin’s book, however. Instead, the poem paraphrased by Chukovskaya’s protagonist was written by another Soviet Jewish poet, Aron Kushnirov (1890–1949). Under the title “Father Commander” (“Foter-Komandir”), it appeared in 1947 in the first issue of the Moscow Yiddish almanac *Heymland* (*Homeland*), edited by Kushnirov (1947a: 104–105).²⁶ It was published the same year in Konstantin Simonov’s *Novyi Mir*, where Chukovskaya read it in Ruvim Moran’s Russian translation (Kushnirov 1947b: 117).²⁷ Like Veksler, who confides in Nina Sergeevna that his eighteen-year-old son (his only son) was killed on the frontlines, Kushnirov lost his son in the war, too. But unlike Galkin, who was arrested in Maleevka on February 26, 1949, Kushnirov was the only poet and member of the Jewish Antifascist Committee (JAC), headed by Solomon Mikhoels, who was not purged by Stalin. He died in Moscow in September 1949, half a year after the rest of the JAC poets had been arrested (see Rubenstein/Naumov 2005). Thus, in Chukovskaya’s novella, it is Kushnirov’s poem, rather than Galkin’s, that Veksler recites to Nina Sergeevna, but it is Galkin, not Kushnirov, who serves as Veksler’s historical prototype.

Appalled by the poem’s Russian translation, slated for publication in a Soviet journal, Nina Sergeevna not only invokes the proverbial untranslatability of poetry as such, but also targets the clichés of socialist realism that Veksler’s text, no doubt, exhibits, despite being written in a language other than Russian. Ironically, one of Galkin’s (although not Kushnirov’s) Russian translators was Akhmatova, who prized his philosophical poems,

26 I owe this observation to Dr. Dov-Ber Kerler. I am also grateful to Barbara Harshav, Bogdan Horbal, Amanda Seigel, and Lyudmila Sholokhova for their help in attributing the poem.

27 Cf. Chukovskaya’s diary entry for April 10, 1947: “Nothing interesting except Kushnerov [sic]” (“Кроме Кушнерова никого интересного”; Chukovskaia 2010: 145). *Father Commander* (*Foter-Komandir*) served as the title of Kushnirov’s 1948 book of poetry.

as well as the poet personally. This is why one of Akhmatova's earlier poems "There's a rustle and crunch: it feels good here..." ("Khorosho zdes': i shelest, i khrust..." 1922) is quoted (without attribution, of course) amidst Nina Sergeevna's ruminations on the nature of poetry, meant as an antithesis to the dull Russian versions of Veksler's patriotic verses about the war, no matter how genuine and sincere they may have been in the original language and in the poet's mind. "Nothing makes it so apparent than the helplessness of a translation," Nina Sergeevna concludes, "that verse is created not merely, indeed, not so much from words, thoughts, meters, and images, but from the weather, nervousness, from silence, separation... Not only from the black lines of print, but also from the gaps between the lines, deep pauses which govern the breathing – and the soul..." (Chukovskaia 1972: 88).²⁸ Two quatrains of Akhmatova's poem "about winter" are quoted as an example of what true poetry "grows from," echoing Akhmatova's poetic credo.²⁹

Increasingly disillusioned with Veksler and his war poems, which Nina Sergeevna is unable to appreciate in the original, she soon starts avoiding him, irritated by his unannounced visits, which sidetrack her from "going under" in her own clandestine manuscript. Instead, she becomes irresistibly drawn to Bilibin, a fellow Soviet writer who has recently returned from the camps. It is his first-hand experience of the past, and not Veksler's, that she seeks in order to find out what happened to her husband a decade earlier, during the Great Terror. "'I'm going to listen to something he wouldn't say in your presence!' was what I wanted to reply [to Veksler]. 'I'm going to listen to news from over there, news from another planet about Alyosha. What has it got to do with you?'" (Chukovskaia 1972: 67).³⁰ It is indeed Bilibin who,

28 "Ни на чем в такой степени, как на беспомощности перевода, не видно, что стих создан не только и не столько из слов, мыслей, размеров и образов, а из погоды, нервности, из тишины, из разлуки" (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 137).

29 Cf.: "Когда б вы знали, из какого сора / Растут стихи, не ведая стыда" (Akhmatova 1998: 1, 461); "If only you knew from what rubbish / Poetry grows, knowing no shame" (Akhmatova 1997: 414). Only one quatrain of Akhmatova's 1922 poem is cited in later editions of *Going Under*.

30 "Я иду слушать то, чего он при тебе не расскажет! – хотела я ответить. – Я иду слушать вести оттуда. Вести об Алеше с другой планеты. При чем тут ты?" (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 125).

one day, explains to Nina Sergeevna that her husband's verdict – “ten years without the right to correspondence” – in reality meant a death sentence.

The past and the present collide for Nina Sergeevna when, towards the end of her stay in Litvinovka, and shortly before she completes her manuscript about the Terror, the news breaks that the publishing house *Der Emes* has been shut down, and its Jewish director and editors arrested. Upon hearing the news, Veksler, who “knew the editors there very well” (“с редакцией тамошней он был близок”), falls ill: “Pages of verses were strewn all over the place, and his service jacket with its decoration hung shapeless and dejected on the back of a chair” (Chukovskaia 1972: 97, 112).³¹ Visiting him, Nina Sergeevna understood “that he was trying to make some positive sense of what was going on” and “remembered trying too, once, to make it all comprehensible and acceptable” (Chukovskaia 1972: 112).³² It was her first-hand experience of the past that allowed her to see beyond Veksler's instinctive attempt to reconcile what was happening in the present. Praising “the brilliance of Stalin's plan for the defense of Moscow” and deluding himself that “Stalin threw into the battle untrained men to give time for the reserves to be brought up” (Chukovskaia 1972: 112),³³ Veksler, whose eighteen-year-old son was killed at the front, hid behind the protective shield of his own (or, rather, Kushnirov's) war poem, which he had only recently recited to Nina Sergeevna (even though Stalin may not have been mentioned in it explicitly). Veksler's rapid and irreversible descent into the spiral of self-deception is reminiscent not only of Nina Sergeevna's own experience ten years earlier. It brings even more forcefully to mind the delusional protagonist of Chukovskaya's first novella, Sofia Petrovna. What also points to this uncanny parallel between the two works, separated by a decade, is that Sofia Petrovna is employed at

31 “[Л]источки стихов валяются повсюду, он в помятой пижаме, а френч с орденом как-то понуро, бесформенно повис на спинке стула” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 153).

32 “[С]тараются благополучно осмыслить происходящее. (Я помню, я когда-то тоже старалась сделать его понятным и даже приемлемым)” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 153).

33 “[Г]ениальность сталинского плана обороны Москвы. Сталин бросил в бой необученных, а пока подоспели резервы, Москва была спасена” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 153).

a Leningrad publishing house, whose director and editors are also arrested and disappear overnight in the 1930s, not entirely unlike the editors of Der Emes twelve years later. The arrests at Sofia Petrovna's publishing house, in turn, are an allusion to the story of Samuil Marshak's Leningrad branch of the State Children's Publishing House (Lendetgiz), where Chukovskaya worked until 1937, when it was closed. Among those arrested at Lendetgiz was Chukovskaya's second husband, the physicist Matvei Bronshtein, who was shot on February 18, 1939. Not entirely unlike Nina Sergeevna, whose "going under" results in a manuscript about the years of the Terror, Chukovskaya, apart from her two works of fiction, later authored another book dedicated to her own husband's memory (Chukovskaia 2017). Its title – *Procherk (Dash)* – refers to the punctuation mark replacing the "cause of death" on Bronshtein's death certificate, which Chukovskaya managed to obtain eighteen years later, in 1957, the year she completed *Going Under*. (*Procherk* consists of eighteen chapters.)

Two days after the news about Der Emes shakes Litvinovka, Veksler himself is arrested at night. Nina Sergeevna learns about his arrest from Bilibin in the morning at breakfast – much like Klenov, who reported having found out about the arrest of Samuil Galkin the morning he had arrived in Maleevka just in time for breakfast. Although the date of Galkin's arrest (February 26, 1949) is omitted from Klenov's account, the length of Nina Sergeevna's stay in Litvinovka (twenty-six days) may be read as an allusion to Galkin, Veksler's historical prototype. However, unlike Veksler, whose trace disappears as *Going Under* soon comes to an end, and unlike the poets of the JAC, who were shot on August 12, 1952, in Lubyanka, Samuil Galkin survived and returned to Moscow in 1955, bringing back with him new poems composed in prison and the camps, which were published in several Yiddish and Russian editions, both in Russia and abroad, during the poet's lifetime.³⁴

34 Galkin was decorated with the Order of the Red Banner of Labor in 1958 and died in 1960. He is buried at the Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow. See Lev Ozerov's 1990 poem "За ним пришли в Малеевку..." ("He was in Maleevka, / When they came for him..."), in Ozerov 2018: 152–155. See also Chukovskaya's diary entries about Galkin in Chukovskaya 1997: 2, 193, 293, 652. In 1958, Akhmatova was introduced to Galkin by Maria Petrovykh and translated five of his poems. What drew Akhmatova to Galkin, other than his poetry, was the fact that he had served his sentence at

During her twenty-six days in Litvinovka, Nina Sergeevna keeps a diary, which consists of twenty-two entries. For four consecutive days, she writes nothing. On the fifteenth day, her secret manuscript is finally completed: “I had finished, finished! Finished my writing! [...] Here it lay in front of me, written, rewritten, finished. I turned over the pages and corrected the pagination. I would stick it into my diary. A single notebook was easier to hide than two” (Chukovskaia 1972: 98).³⁵ What follows is a “memoir” about the women of the Great Terror narrated in the first person. In this text, which Chukovskaya “publishes” on behalf of her character, Nina Sergeevna travels ten years back in time and finds herself alongside Sofia Petrovna. But it is only now, ten years later, that she is finally able to put their shared experience into words. In this sense, Nina Sergeevna becomes a surrogate “mother” of sorts to Sofia Petrovna, whose naiveté had failed her not just as a citizen, but also as a mother to her arrested son Kolya, in Chukovskaya’s earlier novella.

As the two works draw to a close, one parallel between them is especially striking: both *Sofia Petrovna* and Nina Sergeevna’s inserted novella in *Going Under* deal with the death of a child, whether a baby or grown-up, whether physical or allegorical. In the final scene of *Sofia Petrovna*, the titular character, in her last fit of madness, burns her son’s letter from prison: she “threw it to the floor and stamped on it” (“бросила огонь на пол и *растоптала ногой*”; Chukovskaya 1994: 109; my emphasis). On the stylistic level, the act she performs on her son’s handwritten text, the only “manuscript” she has received from him since he disappeared, is the same as what is done to him physically in prison. Before burning the letter, Sofia Petrovna could read her son’s words: “Mama dear, Investigator Ershov beat me and trampled me” (“Мамочка, меня бил следователь Ершов и *топтал ногами*”; *ibid.*: 106; my emphasis). These marked tautologies in the original Russian – *toptal nogami* and *rastoptala nogoi* – are not only reflected in each other as if in a mirror,

the same labor camp in Abez’, Komi Republic, as her husband Nikolai Punin, who died there in 1953.

35 “Кончила, кончила! Кончила свое писание! Не знаю еще, как оно будет называться, может быть, – ‘Фонари на мосту,’ а может быть просто: ‘Дочка’. Вот оно, написанное, переписанное, конченное лежит передо мной. Я перелистываю страницы, исправляю нумерацию. Я его вклею сюда в дневник. Легче прятать одну тетрадь, чем две” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 143).

but render the two scenes excessive, suggesting not just a beating or the burning of the letter, but murder and death. Furthermore, by burning her son's letter, Sofia Petrovna does exactly what Chukovskaya could not bring herself to do after she wrote the novella in the winter of 1939–1940: “It was dangerous to keep [the manuscript of *Sofia Petrovna*] in the drawer of my desk, but I couldn't bring myself to burn it. I regarded it not so much as a story as a piece of evidence, which it would be dishonorable to destroy” (ibid.: 1).³⁶

In *Going Under*, Nina Sergeevna's manuscript describes a young Finnish woman with a four-month-old baby in the prison line early one morning: “My attention was caught by the way she held her little girl, somehow oddly, on arms stretched out straight, and kept watching the tall door without blinking” (Chukovskaia 1972: 105).³⁷ Upon leaving the prison building and seeing the woman again in the courtyard, Nina Sergeevna hears that the baby has died in her mother's hands “‘already in there’ [...] ‘But I not want to lose my place in the queue of mothers, I want get information. I much loved my husband’” (Chukovskaia 1972: 109–110).³⁸ It is not only the biological norms and ethical conventions that Chukovskaya questions in both texts, as she confronts the nightmarish phantasmagoria of the Great Terror, but also the linguistic ones. As the mothers are “orphaned” from their children, language, unable to catch up with reality, starts to disintegrate, producing tautology and excess, as in *Sofia Petrovna*, or corroding the Finnish woman's command of her non-native Russian, in *Going Under*.

Ten years after the morning described, Nina Sergeevna comes to realize that what had tormented her, Sofia Petrovna, and countless other women like them at the time was “the incomprehensibility and namelessness of what was taking place. [...] My head seemed to be spinning and my heart gradually

36 “Держать ее в ящике письменного стола было рискованно. Однако и сжечь ее у меня не поднималась рука. Я смотрела на нее не столько как на повесть, сколько на свидетельское показание, уничтожить которое было бы бесчестно” (Chukovskaia 1966a: 5).

37 “Я обратила внимание на то, что она как-то странно, на вытянутых прямых руках, держит перед собой девочку и, не мигая, упорно смотрит на высокую дверь” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 148).

38 “Она еще тогда помер [...]. Там. [...]. Но я не хотел потерять очередь матерей, хотел получить правка. Я очень любил мой муж” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 151).

growing heavier not from the sixteen hours spent on my feet but from fruitless efforts to grasp what had happened and give it a name” (Chukovskaia 1972: 101–102).³⁹ Still unable to call it by name, Nina Sergeevna attempts to do so in the process of writing. Her “going under,” into the depths of her memory, brings a sense of fatigue and oblivion to the calendar: “How many days was it now since I hadn’t kept my diary? Three? Five? I couldn’t remember. I didn’t know and didn’t want to know. I tried to avoid knowing what today’s date was. The days were already rolling down hill – towards my departure, the end, and I didn’t want to count them” (ibid.: 110).⁴⁰ By being oblivious to the present, she is able to bring back the past and relive it not just in her own memory and in solitude, but on paper, with the hope “to find brothers – if not now, then in the future” (“найти братьев – не теперь, так в будущем”; ibid.: 37).

Indeed, Nina Sergeevna is not the only person in Litvinovka working on a manuscript about the 1930s. Bilibin is also writing his own narrative about the past, which Nina Sergeevna longs to read. But when she finally does so, two days before her departure, she feels betrayed and ashamed:

I read it through. [...]

I would never forget a single word.

At first I recognized everything and rejoiced at it all. [...] Well, of course, he couldn’t very well write about the camp for *Znamya*... But then why use those mountains, that forest, those people... [...]

When I had finished reading I closed the manuscript and sat at the desk for a long time, gazing at the neat folder. “Nikolai Bilibin” had been inscribed on it in distinct round letters. “Fedosya’s Victory. A Tale.”

So this was what he had been writing from seven o’clock in the morning. This was why he had come here, to be quiet. This was the memorial he had raised to the memory of his friend [...].

39 “Мне казалось, что голова у меня кружится и сердце медленно тяжелеет не от шестнадцати часов, проведенных на ногах, а от бесплодных усилий понять случившееся и дать ему имя” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 146).

40 “Сколько дней я уже не писала дневник? Три? Пять? Не помню. Не знаю и знать не хочу. Стараюсь не знать, которое сегодня число. Дни уже идут под гору: туда, к отъезду, к концу, и я не хочу считать их” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 152).

Up till now I had often experienced grief in my life. But this was the first time that I felt shame.

(Chukovskaya 1976: 126–129)

Я прочитала. [...]

Никогда не забуду ни единого слова.

Сначала я все узнавала и всему радовалась. [...] Ну, конечно, не мог же он для “Знамени” написать о лагере... Но зачем же тогда было брать те горы, тот лес, тех людей... [...]

Окончив, я долго сидела за столом, закрыв рукопись и разглядывая аккуратную папку. “Николай Билибин” написано было отчетливыми круглыми буквами. “Федосьина победа. Повесть.”

Вот что он писал здесь – с семи утра. Вот зачем он приехал сюда, в тишину. Вот какой памятник воздвиг он своему другу. [...]

До сих пор мне случалось испытывать в жизни горе. Но стыд я испытала впервые.

(Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 162–163)

Like Veksler, the character of Bilibin also has a historical prototype first named by another recent arrival from the Soviet Union, Grigory Svirsky. (Like Klenov, Svirsky was a Second World War veteran and member of the Writers' Union before emigrating to Israel and then on to Canada in 1972.) Bilibin was modeled on Vasily Azhaev, author of the famous novel *Daleko ot Moskvy* (*Far from Moscow*), which Svirsky described as “a record of falsehood in an age of bloodthirsty falsifications” (“Рекорд фальши в эпоху кровавых фальсификаций”; Svirskii 1979: 91).⁴¹ In 1934–1937, Azhaev was a prisoner in the far eastern camps of the Gulag, but his quasi-autobiographical novel, much like Bilibin's fictional manuscript, rendered this first-hand experience barely recognizable. A less lacquered version of *Far from Moscow* was first

41 In his monograph on Azhaev, Thomas Lahusen points out that Svirsky had actually known Azhaev personally and even thanked him in writing for coming to his defense in 1952 (Lahusen 1997: 194–195). Not disclosing his personal acquaintance with Azhaev, Svirsky reports having met Chukovskaya in Maleevka more than once, “gray-haired, silent, short-sighted, almost never smiling,” particularly in the late 1940s (Svirskii 1979: 309).

published in the journal *Dal'nii Vostok* in Khabarovsk, where Azhaev worked as an editor upon his release.⁴² But in 1948, the novel was reworked for publication in *Novyi Mir* (Azhaev 1948), at the time spearheaded by Konstantin Simonov.⁴³ In fact, it was Simonov and his editors who, according to Svirsky, made most of the changes to Azhaev's text on the author's behalf, so much so that the emaciated prisoners employed building oil pipeline in the Far East were replaced by free workers. The portrayal of the construction project itself was infused with the pathos of joyful enthusiasm for socialist labor, and the head of the camps in the Far East, Colonel Barabanov, evolved into a typical socialist-realist father figure Batmanov. And so on. In his foreword, Simonov wrote that it was "solely out of an irresistible inner need" that Azhaev described Gulag prisoners "as free people and Soviet citizens, who, under inhuman conditions, contributed to our victory over fascism. And he did so quite consciously, in the hope that his novel would become a monument to their efforts, courage, and faithfulness to the motherland."⁴⁴ It is this kind of literature that Chukovskaya, via Nina Sergeevna, brands as the ultimate abuse of the written word not just in the Tolstoyan sense, as in the epigraph to *Going Under*, but also in the Orwellian one.⁴⁵

42 Vasily Azhaev, "Daleko ot Moskvyy," *Dal'nii Vostok* 1–2 (1946), 4 (1947), and 2 (1948).

43 In 1949, *Far from Moscow* came out as a separate edition and was awarded the Stalin Prize of the First Degree. A film adaptation by Aleksandr Stolper was made the following year (awarded a Stalin Prize in 1951). From 1960 until his death in 1968, Azhaev was the editor-in-chief of *Sovetskaia literatura* (*Soviet Literature*), a journal that published socialist realist works "for export" in foreign languages. On Azhaev's novel, see Lahusen 1997: 103–122.

44 "В этой книге он и о заключенных написал, как о свободных людях, как о советских гражданах, которые в нечеловеческих условиях внесли свой собственный вклад в нашу победу над фашизмом. И сделал это вполне сознательно, желая своим романом поставить памятник их усилиям, их мужеству, их преданности родине" (Simonov 1988: 6–7).

45 Coincidentally, the year Orwell's famous dystopia *1984* was first published in England – 1949 – is the same as the historical setting of *Going Under*. When Chukovskaya came across a radio program about Orwell, broadcast by one of the foreign stations, she remarked that Orwell's thoughts on language in general and the language of lies in particular, as in *Animal Farm* and *1984*, "are entirely consonant with the thoughts expressed by me in *Going Under*" ("мысли о языке, совер-

In *Going Under*, the title of Azhaev's conformist novel is camouflaged as "Fedosya's Victory," while Simonov's *Novyi Mir* is turned into *Znamya*. As Anne Hartmann has pointed out, "It is not only the author who is held accountable for writing a book that beats 'the record of falsehood in the age of bloodthirsty falsifications,'" as Svirsky had put it, "but the literary community and the society, whose traumas Azhaev serviced, himself having fallen victim to those traumas."⁴⁶ While Chukovskaya must have been familiar with Azhaev's work before she began writing *Going Under* in 1949, the details about his novel and career – namely, that his novel had been rewritten by Simonov and his team – may not have been widely known then. Still, in this context, *Going Under* is an uncompromising commentary on the Soviet literature of the period, and while Bilibin's character was modeled on Azhaev, it should be interpreted more generally as "a cumulative image of all the unfortunate writers who have betrayed their friends" ("собираемый образ всех сломленных писателей-горемык, предавших своих товарищей"), afraid as they were in the late 1940s of receiving a second sentence in the Gulag (Svirskii 1979: 311).⁴⁷

When Bilibin comes back to pick up his manuscript, Nina Sergeevna calls him a "coward" ("трус"), "false witness" ("лжесвидетель"), and "liar" ("лжец"; Chukovskaia 1979: 129). But on the eve of her departure from Litvinovka, she repents of her uncompromising condemnation of the sick old man's lies.⁴⁸ But that moment Bilibin was already "walking out" of her life

шенно совпадающие с теми, которые высказаны мною в 'Спуске'; Chukovskaia 2015: 266–267; diary entry for April 27, 1972).

46 "Daß dieses Buch, indem es aus 'dem Gulag eine Apotheose der freien Arbeit in einem freien Land' machte, den 'Verlogenheitsrekord in der Epoche blutiger Fälschungen' hielt, lag somit nicht allein in der Verantwortung des Autors, sondern auch des Literaturbetriebs und der Gesellschaft jener Zeit, deren Traumata Azaev bediente und denen er selbst zum Opfer fiel" (Hartmann 2007: 79).

47 Among other Soviet writers like Azhaev, Svirsky lists Yaroslav Smeliakov, Aleksandr Rekemchuk, and Yury Smirnov (Svirskii 1979: 311).

48 "Forgive me!" I wanted to say. 'I didn't have the right to judge you; least of all I, for no dogs ever threw themselves on me and I've never seen the wooden tag on the leg of a dead man... Forgive me! You wouldn't wish to go back there: to felling trees, to the mines. Go back for a second time! The story you wrote is your weak shield, your unreliable wall... Forgive me! You've already had one heart attack – illness

forever, without hearing her inner cry. Chukovskaya, for her part, never invoked Azhaev directly by name in any of her writings, having confined him and his conformist novel entirely to the world of fiction.⁴⁹

The deeper Nina Sergeevna “plunges” into her own memory and her country’s past, the fewer chances there are for her secret manuscript (and, for that matter, Chukovskaya’s novella) to emerge from these depths aboveground at home. “Why, then, bother to go under?” Nina Sergeevna asks herself early on. “For even if my spoils were turned into a manuscript – into paper and ink – they would never be turned into a book. In any event not before my death. Why then did I descend?” (Chukovskaia 1972: 37).⁵⁰ As was common for clandestine texts such as hers at the time, forced out of the official literary field

is expensive and you need your earnings. And how else can you earn money as a sick man? Only by writing. Writing lies like a hack... Forgive me! I didn’t have the right to demand the truth from you. I’m healthy and yet I keep silent. I was never beaten at night in the investigator’s room. And when they beat you I kept silent. What right have I then to judge you now? Forgive me my cursed cruelty, forgive me!” (Chukovskaia 1979: 13); “Простите меня! – хотелось мне сказать. – Я не имела права судить вас; я, на которую никогда не кидались собаки, я, которая никогда не видела деревянной бирки на ноге мертвеца... Простите меня! Вы не желаете обратно: туда, на лесоповал, в шахты. Второй раз! Ваша повесть – ваш бессильный щит, ваша ненадежная ограда... Простите меня! Один инфаркт у вас уже был – болезнь дорого стоит, вам нужен заработок. А чем еще, вы, инвалид, можете заработать? Только писанием. Писанием трафаретной лжи... Простите меня! Я не имела права требовать от вас правды, я-то здоровая – и то молчу. Меня по ночам не избивали в кабинете следователя. А когда вас били, я молчала. Какое же право я имею судить вас теперь? Простите мне мою окающую жестокость, простите меня!” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 167).

49 A passing reference to Azhaev is found in Kornei Chukovsky’s diary entry for April 19, 1962: “I am reading Azhaev. I could not even imagine one could be such a talentless writer. It is beyond literature” (“Читаю Ажаева. Я даже не предполагал, что можно быть таким неталантливым писателем. Это за гранью литературы.” – Chukovskii 1994: 310). Two years before his death, in 1966, Azhaev wrote his second novel *Vagon* (*The Train Car*), in which the story of a young prisoner in the Gulag is told from a much more outspoken perspective. It was not published in Russia until 1988.

50 “Зачем же я погружаюсь? Ведь если моя добыча и превратится в рукопись – в бумагу и в чернила, – то в книгу она не превратится никогда. Во всяком случае, до моей смерти. Зачем же я спускаюсь?” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 105).

and into the underground (or “underwater”) at home, they were bound to resurface abroad, in tamizdat. In this sense, the title of Chukovskaya’s *Going Under* implied going elsewhere, as well as into the future, however near or far. Answering her own question, Nina Sergeevna sees both destinations as the ultimate terminus of her manuscript: “I wanted to find brothers – if not now, then in the future. [...] I had been writing a book to find brothers, even if only there in the unknown distance” (Chukovskaia 1972: 37).⁵¹ While the “future” meant a time when Chukovskaya’s fiction could finally be published in Russia, the “unknown distance” can be understood geographically. The “brothers” Nina Sergeevna looks for but fails to find in Litvinovka identified themselves elsewhere, across the ocean. When *Going Under* resurfaced on their shores, one of them even assured the author, equating Chukovskaya with her fictional character, that “her plunges were not in vain; that her memory became a book, if only outside her motherland, through the efforts of the brothers she was looking for.”⁵²

One wonders, however, why “brothers,” not “sisters,” if Nina Sergeevna’s manuscript (which she even ponders entitling “Daughter”) describes “the undersociety of women in the prison lines” (Holmgren 1993: 59). In her portrayal of this “undersociety,” Nina Sergeevna stands alongside her tongue-tied and grief-stricken “sisters,” but in Litvinovka she finds herself surrounded by male writers, be they Russian or Jewish, war veterans like Veksler or former Gulag prisoners like Bilibin. Her nonconformity to her current surroundings, understood as a miniature model of the post-war Soviet literary establishment at large, is thus marked not only as a literary but also as a gender category.⁵³ Indeed, Nina Sergeevna is “the only writer in the

51 “Я хочу найти братьев – не теперь, так в будущем. [...] Пишу книгу, чтобы найти братьев – хотя бы там, в неизвестной дали” (Chukovskaia 2000: 1, 106).

52 “что ее погружения были не напрасны: что ее память стала книгой, пусть лишь за пределами родины, усилиями братьев, которых она искала” (Е.В. 1972). Another tamizdat critic, for that matter, spoke not only of *Going Under*, but also of *Sofia Petrovna* and even *Zapiski ob Anne Akhmatovoi* as “internal emigration” (“внутренняя эмиграция”; Breitbart 1977: 172).

53 While condemning the male “artists” for their conformism and abuse of the written word, the female characters in *Going Under* “exemplify an altogether different Stalinist vice. [...] [T]hey either serve or accompany the ‘artists’. In Nina Sergeevna’s critical reading, they, too, devalue culture, but in a more physical way; she

sanatorium who explicitly protests official lies and voices her own independent opinions,” but her role is nevertheless reduced to that of “a listener and a seeker of [the] hidden ‘truth’” borne by men, in whose midst she poses as “a shining anomaly” (Holmgren 1993: 62).

While *Going Under* is not, strictly speaking, a prison narrative, the manuscript Nina Sergeevna’s secretly writes and “self-publishes” in her diary certainly follows the tendency of Gulag narratives as a genre that turns upside down the conventional meanings of words (as when mothers are “orphaned” by the deaths of their children). It is in this context, exemplified by Orwell’s dystopia, where Newspeak is the only official “language” allowed in print, that the “truths” or “true meanings” of the historical past bestowed upon Nina Sergeevna by her fellow male writers also appear inverted, ultimately. Veksler’s poems, or rather their Russian translations, as well as his fatal self-deception on the eve of his arrest, upend the reality he had witnessed on the frontlines during the Second World War. The promised revelations about the camps in Bilibin’s manuscript turn out to be the opposite of what Nina Sergeevna hoped to read. Her husband’s official verdict – “ten years without the right to correspondence” – also proves to be nothing but a euphemism for a death sentence. In terms of gender, the “brothers” she longs to find as a result of her “going under,” accordingly, may also imply the reverse: the women, or “sisters,” of the Great Terror who shared Nina Sergeevna’s and Chukovskaya’s own first-hand experiences and, hence, are the target audience of their respective manuscripts.

Going Under is written by a “widow writing about a widow writing about her loss” (Holmgren 1993: 56). But it is also a work of literature about literature deemed “un-literature” in its native geography and literary jurisdiction, as Orwell would have it. As such, apart from Orwell’s famous dystopia set in the future, in 1984 (but first published the same year as the setting of *Going Under*, in 1949), Chukovskaya’s fiction, for all its historical authenticity, brings to mind another British author, whose seemingly apolitical nineteenth-century classic, beloved worldwide by children as much as by adults, depicts the adventures of a one female character, albeit much younger than

scorns them as the embodiment of vulgar materialism and sensual indulgence” (Holmgren 1993: 61).

Nina Sergeevna, who famously falls down a rabbit hole: “I wonder if I shall fall right THROUGH the earth! How funny it’ll seem to come out among the people that walk with their heads downward! The Antipathies, I think – [...] but I shall have to ask them what the name of the country is, you know” (Carroll 1866: 5). Lewis Carroll’s Victorian fantasy *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (whose draft title was *Alice’s Adventures Under Ground*) is based on absurdist wordplay and overturning other life concepts as well. The “empowerment” of Alice via her magical descent into and under the symbolic passageway through the ground, resulting in physical displacement and bodily disproportion, is akin to the miraculous transformation of Chukovskaya’s manuscripts into books in a different geography and literary jurisdiction. In defiance of the physical laws of gravity, it is there, in the magical underground, that Alice discovers a “brotherhood” of anthropomorphic creatures, whose society and system of justice she challenges and upsets but whom she considers more interesting and “real” than the reality above ground.⁵⁴ Alice’s adventures, however, turn out to be nothing but a dream: having rebelled, wreaked havoc, grown back to her true size, and acquired personhood in the wonderland, she wakes up on her sister’s knees exactly where she had drifted off and just in time for tea. Chukovskaya’s *Sofia Petrovna* and *Going Under* returned from “wonderland” during perestroika, in time for a new historical era that made tamizdat a thing of the past.

54 “Alice, in her final adventure in Wonderland, becomes increasingly bold during the trial to determine who stole the tarts of the Queen of Hearts. [...] As Alice comes into herself, chaos becomes the order of the day, and one senses that Wonderland’s system of justice will never be quite the same” (Brandser 2001: 221). Moreover, “[i]n this closing episode of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), Lewis Carroll dramatizes what was to become an increasingly popular Victorian scene: a woman questioning and critiquing the law and claiming a place for herself within its institutions” (ibid.).

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Alexander Jacobson

Tamizdat as Masquerade: The Case of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's Four *Gulags*

Abstract: This article investigates the early publication history of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Arkhipelag Gulag* in order to develop a new understanding of Russian-language tamizdat. After exploring four separate yet textually identical versions of this book, it shifts to a broader discussion of tamizdat, arguing that the phenomenon is best understood not by looking for certain texts, but rather for a certain type of book. It concludes by detailing the specific book form employed by tamizdat, a type of book meant to hide illicit texts from the Soviet authorities.

Keywords: tamizdat, book history, YMCA Press, Flegon Press, *Gulag Archipelago*

Introduction

In his memoirs, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn repeatedly uses the metaphor of an explosion to describe December 28, 1973 – the date of *Arkhipelag Gulag*'s first publication (Solzhenitsyn 1995: 247). Originally, the author had hoped to delay the book's publication until 1975. In September 1973, however, the KGB arrested one of Solzhenitsyn's typists and seized one of *Gulag*'s few manuscripts. As a result, Solzhenitsyn's aide committed suicide and the KGB gained access to the author's magnum opus (Scammell 1984: 813, 815). Fearing that state security would either restrict access to his work or publish a bastardized edition of the text themselves – as they had done with Svetlana Allilueva's memoirs – Solzhenitsyn felt compelled to accelerate production of his book (Solzhenitsyn 1995: 246). Throughout the rest of 1973, the author labored feverishly to prepare his manuscript for publication, adding epigraphs and prodding his publisher (ibid.: 237, 245). Finally, in late December 1973, his

labor bore fruit with the release of *Gulag*'s first edition – the catalyst for Solzhenitsyn's "explosion" and the epicenter of an immediate literary sensation.

The focus of attention was a long, weighty Russian-language book issued by Solzhenitsyn's long-time publisher – YMCA Press, a Parisian firm that specialized in tamizdat and émigré literature. YMCA did its best to distribute Solzhenitsyn's text: the publisher produced a first edition of fifty thousand copies, which, in the words of the publisher, was an "unprecedented print run within the emigration" ("достиг в несколько недель небывалого за всю историю эмиграции тиража"; Kartashev/Struve 1990: 31). Eventually, the text reached a far larger audience than this relatively limited print run would suggest: YMCA's book, in conjunction with myriad translations, soon set a record for multinational book sales (Malia 1977: 46–47). This is not to say, however, that YMCA's first Russian edition escaped attention. In his history of the publishing house, Nikita Struve, YMCA's head during the 1970s, recounts that "[the YMCA first edition] was bought as an object, as a relic even by those who did not read or practically did not read Russian."¹ Later, when the book was read on Radio Liberty, the announcer began with a meticulous description of the YMCA edition, including bibliographic features like its cover and imprint (Vinogradov 1974).

YMCA's *Arhipelag Gulag* was thus a storied volume, treated as an object of renown in its own right. Alongside this famous edition, however, YMCA issued a second, lesser-known Russian-language version of the work. Textually indistinguishable from the aforementioned book, this volume differed only in terms of physical form: it was a small, svelte book bound in brown plastic. In addition, two other, more obscure editions of *Gulag* appeared in the same year as YMCA's labors, thus rounding out the book's early Russian-language editions. These books, crafted by a British publisher named Alec Flegon, were essentially photocopies of the French editions, but differed in terms of imprints. The first of these volumes replaced YMCA's imprimatur with that of Flegon's eponymous firm, the Flegon Press. The second, on the other hand, contained a striking surprise: a Soviet colophon and imprint,

1 "Его покупали даже те, кто не читал или почти не читал по-русски, как предмет, как реликвию" (Kartashev/Struve 1990: 31). Unless otherwise indicated, the translations are mine.

thus purporting that the book was the product of the Soviet publishing house “Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury.”

Despite these variations, all four books feature one and the same text. Indeed, they present *Gulag* in identical layouts, paginations, and fonts. The features differentiating these volumes – imprints and physical forms – were beyond Solzhenitsyn's (or any author's) purview. In other words, the differences between these four volumes boil down to features crafted by publishers, not writers.

These books divide neatly into two groups. As I will show, YMCA's famous edition and the Flegon Press volume – the more conventional of the four books, both of which largely conform to typical publishing conventions – were meant to be sold to Western émigré readers. On the other hand, the miniature *Gulag* and the fake Soviet edition, which buck typical publishing norms via extreme miniaturization and false imprints, respectively, were exclusively published in the West for smuggling into the Soviet Union.

When we combine these two observations, we come to a striking conclusion. While a textual lens would equate these four books, a bibliographic perspective focused on material forms allow us to distinguish volumes intended for Soviet readers from books consumed in the émigré community. That is, the example of the four *Gulags* underscores that émigré and Soviet readerships frequently consumed one and the same text, but that they did so via radically different objects.

This article expands upon this observation to develop a new definition for Russian-language tamizdat, a unique but consistent strain of this practice.² Contrary to previous scholarship, which has largely defined tamizdat as a type of dissident text, I argue that the core of Russian-language tamizdat constitutes material bibliographic forms – that is, a type of *book* – developed for the benefit of a specific, Soviet audience. To develop this point, I will begin with a history of *Arkhipelag Gulag*. Once I have described this text's path to publication, I will attempt a description of tamizdat writ large, using

2 In this article, I use “tamizdat” interchangeably for “Russian-language tamizdat,” but my analysis is limited to Russian language material. This specific strain of tamizdat is made unique, as I will show, by the specific pressures present in disseminating books to the USSR.

the example of the *Gulags* to underscore my arguments. I will conclude by explicating the logic undergirding tamizdat's unique form, showing how a miniature volume and a false imprint are bound by a common impulse – a desire to disguise texts from the gaze of the Soviet authorities through a bibliographic form I term *masquerade*.

The Curious Tale of the Four *Gulags*: The YMCA Editions

Before turning to a discussion of tamizdat per se, I need to finish the example begun above – that is, investigate why both YMCA and the Flegon Press chose to publish two textually identical versions of Solzhenitsyn's work each. To do so, I will look at each of the publishers in turn, beginning with YMCA before turning to Flegon.

For YMCA, publishing Solzhenitsyn's texts in two editions was by no means unusual; rather, it was a common *modus operandi* for the company. As Aleksandr Gurevich, an historian of YMCA, writes, "Many of A. I. Solzhenitsyn's books were published in several versions: in hardcover by subscription, in softcover for retail, and in a pocket format."³ The latter of these books – the softcover book meant for retail sale – corresponds to the iconic volume discussed above. Clad in a red, grey, and white cover depicting a prison scene and weighing a hefty 650 grams, the book has a formidable presence. It is bolstered by the work's physical dimensions – nineteen by fourteen by three centimeters (Solzhenitsyn 1973c). In a word, the book is big – a size that was poetically echoed in the work's "unprecedented" print run.

This volume presents a stark contrast to the "pocket format" edition, referring to the smaller, svelter *Gulag*. Instead of the white, grey, and red pictorial cover, this book is bound in a brownish plastic, adorned only by Solzhenitsyn's name, the title, and asterisks representing the work's position within *Gulag's* three-volume sequence. Further, this version is noticeably smaller than the softcover edition, measuring 15.2 by 11.2 centimeters and

3 "Многие книги А. И. Солженицына издавались в нескольких вариантах: в супербложке по подписке, в мягкой обложке для розничной продажи и в карманном формате" (Gurevich 2004: 12).

weighing 220 grams (Solzhenitsyn 1973d). The lower weight is explained both by the book's smaller size and by its use of Bible paper, which the book's publishers notably juxtaposed to the paperback edition's "normal" paper (Morozov 1974: 17).

From mere bibliographic attributes, this second version of the book seems markedly inferior to the first. Its Bible paper was easily torn, and its font difficult to read; and the first version of the book, although large, was still portable, depriving the latter version of that unique utility. Importantly, even its text was identical to that of its larger brother. Simply put, there was no informational benefit to be derived by reading the pocket book instead of its paperback alternative. Gurevich, however, gestures towards why YMCA chose to produce such a volume: he writes that the press printed pocket-books "for the facilitation of shipment to Russia" ("для облегчения их переправки в Россию"; Gurevich 2004: 12).

Though it may seem obvious, Gurevich strikes at the heart of the matter. Though unified by a common text, these two books allow for different means of transportation. As Solzhenitsyn writes in the introduction to *Gulag*, there were no legal means of importing this book into the Soviet Union: "the very reading and handing on of this book will be very dangerous" ("само чтение и передача этой книги будет большой опасностью"; Solzhenitsyn 1974b: xii). Solzhenitsyn, however, still hoped that his work would be read behind the Iron Curtain.⁴ In response to this desire, YMCA created a volume – the pocket book – that could help get *Gulag* into the hands of Soviet readers. Specifically, the pocket *Gulag* was less than half the size of the larger YMCA edition, allowing it to be smuggled into the Soviet Union either in large numbers or in small spaces – such as, in one memorable instance, inside a baby's diaper (Reisch 2013: 513). Needless to say, neither of these tactics would have been possible with the unwieldy paperback.

Thus, the pocket book allowed for an ease of smuggling that would have been unthinkable with its larger relative. It is crucial, though, that the design of this volume – the form that rendered smuggling possible – was both pur-

4 The author "salutes" the "future [Soviet] readers" ("читателям будущим я должен с благодарностью поклониться") who, he felt confident, would eventually read his book (Solzhenitsyn 1974b: xii).

posefully chosen and geographically marked. The pocket edition should not be seen as a curiosity or as an object meant for a generic audience; instead, as Gurevich implies, it was a means of linking Solzhenitsyn's text with a Soviet readership. Therefore, the pocket book's publication represents the creation of a *material object* solely for Soviet readers – a hallmark, as we will see, of Russian-language tamizdat.

The Curious Tale of the Four *Gulags*: The Flegon Press Editions

The two separate, nearly simultaneous editions of *Gulag* offer an intriguing parallel to the dynamic traced above. On February 13, 1974, an edition of *Gulag* went on sale in Foyle's Bookshop in London (Davies 1974). Aside from a new cover (a brownish sheet of paper containing only the title and the author's name), the book was identical to the YMCA edition. Indeed, it was a photocopy of the Parisian paperback, even measuring the same dimensions as the original. However, these books differed in one important respect: on the third page of the London edition, instead of YMCA's imprint, the words "Flegon Press" were prominently displayed across the bottom of the page.

This edition had been issued by Alec Flegon, a notorious London-based publisher of tamizdat. Though its piracy may seem brazen, the book's appearance was no great surprise. Flegon had a long history of pirating Solzhenitsyn; in fact, he had launched his publishing career by issuing a photocopy of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (*Odin den' Ivana Denisovicha*) that had been cribbed from *Novyi mir* (Jacobson 2020: 242).⁵ As Flegon grew in renown, he continued to print Solzhenitsyn, publishing myriad texts by the author over several decades (ibid.: 242–244). Eventually, however, Flegon's role in disseminating Solzhenitsyn's oeuvre was overshadowed by the author's official publisher, which Flegon believed had stolen Solzhenitsyn's works from him (ibid.: 244). Enraged, Flegon sought revenge by pirating YMCA's *Avgust 14* (*August 1914*). In his own words, he "copied [the] book photographically, supplied it with good illustrations, improved it with a remarkable dustjacket

5 Incidentally, this was the first Western publication of Solzhenitsyn (Jacobson 2020: 242).

and cover and put it on the market at a lower price than 'YMCA Press' (Flegon 1984: 12–13) Though his effort was quickly quashed by a British court, Flegon still considered it a minor success (ibid.: 13–14). Accordingly, when *Gulag* was published in 1973, Flegon decided to repeat his stunt, photocopying *Gulag*'s text and releasing it on the London market (Jacobson 2020: 244).

In his memoirs, Flegon justified this piracy by referring to Solzhenitsyn's "desire" to make *Gulag* available to a wide public (Flegon 1984: 15, 17). He even claimed to have sold the book at one third of YMCA's price, thus aiding Solzhenitsyn's intention by making *Gulag* available to "Russian émigrés... [who] cannot permit themselves the luxury of buying the book in soft covers if one paid ten dollars a copy" (ibid.: 17). However, as this quotation makes clear, the Flegon Press *Gulag* was only distributed among an émigré readership. Given its size, its point of sale in a London bookstore, and an imprint clearly marking the volume as an English product, Flegon's *Gulag* was subject to the same transit difficulties as the YMCA paperback and was thus limited to the United Kingdom. Aware of this deficiency and absolutely committed to the goal of distribution, Flegon took steps to rectify the problem. Like YMCA, he eventually came to the conclusion that he would need to issue a second edition of the book. Unlike YMCA, however, he chose not to resort to miniaturization. In his memoirs, he describes his eventual path of action: "I put [*Gulag*] on the British and international markets in two variants. One under the name 'Flegon Press,' the other under the name of a Soviet publishing house so that this book could be brought into the USSR under the noses of the unsuspecting customs" (ibid.: 15–16).

The latter book was a copy of *Arkipelag Gulag* bearing the imprint of the publishing house *Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury*. Externally identical to the Flegon Press edition, and textually identical to all three other editions of *Gulag*, the book bears the imprint of a Soviet publishing house at the bottom of its title page, notably juxtaposed with the slogan "Workers of the world, unite!" at the top of the same leaf. On the verso, where all other editions have western colophons, the "political" *Gulag* provides a Soviet colophon, including information such as the print run size, the name of the printing press, and the date of publication (Solzhenitsyn 1973a: 1, 2). Given the nature of the ensuing text, these features can easily be read as farcical. Indeed, this is how Solzhenitsyn, at least, interpreted the entire book. In a deposition for

a lawsuit against Flegon, Solzhenitsyn describes this volume as diegetically absurd, given that his expulsion from the Soviet Union was precipitated by YMCA's publication of *Gulag*. He even goes as far as to describe the book as "ridiculous" and a "cynical joke" (Solzhenitsyn 1974a).

Flegon, on the other hand, clearly did not see the book in the same light. He is quoted as stating, during the court hearing, that he "was only publishing in the first place because [he] wanted to get the material *to the Russian readers* [*italics mine*]," a desire described by the plaintiff as "a very powerful part of his motive, that he wanted to get his material into Russia, get it read by the otherwise deprived readers, that he wanted to combat the Soviet system" (YMCA v. Flegon 1974: 42). Flegon even seems to have succeeded in his efforts – he remarks that he sent a few hundred copies of the book to dissidents behind the Iron Curtain "free of charge" before he was stymied by legal action, implying that "unsuspecting [Soviet] customs" were actually fooled by his mystification (Defence 1974).

How, then, should we read the tortured saga of the Flegon *Gulags*? Like YMCA, Flegon seems to have understood two separate facets of Russian-language publishing during the Cold War. First, he realized that both émigré and Soviet readerships wanted particular texts – in this case, *Gulag*. Second, he recognized that typical western books – that is, books exhibiting standard western publishing norms such as imprint, size, etc. – would be physically and politically incapable of reaching a Soviet audience. His memoir is rather explicit here; the fact that he created one volume for British audiences and another for "international" ones speaks to this fact. In short, Flegon employed non-authorial paratexts to create a book capable of sneaking "under the noses" of Soviet border guards and into the hands of Soviet readers. In other words, like YMCA, he created a *material volume* solely for the purpose of transmitting texts to a Soviet readership – which, as I will show, fundamentally defines tamizdat.

A (Re)definition of Tamizdat

We are finally ready to attempt a definition of Russian-language tamizdat. As discussed, the four books comprising the first edition of *Arkipelag Gulag*

share an identical text: except for different imprints, they are direct copies of one another. However, textual parity should not be construed as absolute parity. Instead, these four volumes neatly divide into two groups. On one hand, both Flegon and YMCA created relatively normal books designed for Western European readership who encountered few structural difficulties in obtaining *Gulag*. On the other hand, both publishers also created unconventional books displaying odd paratextual or physical features designed for the benefit of Soviet readers. I would argue that this relationship speaks directly to the contours of tamizdat. That is, attempting to identify tamizdat by pursuing certain texts is futile; the only means of identifying tamizdat is by looking for a *certain type of material book*.

To explain the rationale behind this formulation, I need to unpack the logic of tamizdat. Traditionally, the common denominator of tamizdat scholarship – the literature that most scholars identify with the practice – constitutes those texts spirited out of the Soviet Union for printing abroad and smuggling back into the country. Obviously, this was by no means the easiest way to publish a book: the spatial dislocation in tamizdat's dual smugglings, combined with the practice's clandestine nature, rendered tamizdat a complex and dangerous phenomenon. Though it may seem obvious, then, the above consideration begs a simple question: why did authors and publishers engage in this behavior? Why would these actors willingly – and, for that matter, frequently – pursue this practice?

The answer to this question, of course, likely seems facile: authors and publishers engaged in tamizdat because they could not publish illicit texts in the Soviet Union. Take *Gulag*, for example. Solzhenitsyn understood that his text could never be published within the Soviet Union and consequently decided to send his manuscript abroad where it could be published in more politically hospitable environs.

This example, though, alludes to a crucial point: “tamizdat” texts could be both written and read behind the Iron Curtain. In other words, *tamizdat was not a prerequisite for either the creation or consumption of texts*. Beginning with the former, the Soviet Union played host to a long tradition of illicit authorship, a phenomenon including “writing for the drawer,” unauthorized poetry readings (e.g., Brodsky), and more. *Gulag*, alongside many other “tamizdat” texts, clearly was part of this trend, a tradition of authorship that

transcended tamizdat. In fact, “tamizdat” literature could be created with no original intention to publish via this practice – *Doktor Zhivago*, most famously, but also literature that predated tamizdat, like *Kotlovan* or Kliuev’s poetry (Mancosu 2013: 13–18). The possibility of publishing in tamizdat was by no means a prerequisite for the creation of texts. Authors clearly wrote at least some “tamizdat” literature without aiming to engage in tamizdat at all.

On the other hand, such texts were also consumed outside of tamizdat. There was a robust appetite for illicit texts within the Soviet Union, and an important means of satisfying this demand was samizdat, which produced typewritten and hand-copied manuscripts of various texts, which then percolated through elite circles within the country. Indeed, most tamizdat texts were first circulated in samizdat: large portions of *Gulag*, for example, were initially read in manuscript by Solzhenitsyn’s confidants (Scammell 1984: 621). Importantly, this dynamic was frequently part of the lives of “tamizdat texts”: Labov and Kind-Kovács once defined tamizdat as “those texts that mirror the samizdat world in the West,” alluding to the common practice of republishing texts once found in samizdat within tamizdat volumes (Labov/Kind-Kovács: 3). It is fair to say that “tamizdat texts” were frequently consumed domestically before being sent abroad for publication.

We thus see that much of the literature we consider “tamizdat” was both written and read at home in the Soviet Union before being presented via or conceived of as tamizdat. In other words, tamizdat was neither a precondition nor a necessary means for the production or consumption of texts – it constituted something else altogether. At this point, we need to return to our original question: why did authors and publishers engage in this practice? If authors were already writing and disseminating illicit texts within the Soviet Union, why would they engage in the difficult – and additional – labors of tamizdat?

In short, tamizdat presented possibilities that other practices – namely, samizdat – could not provide. Samizdat was inherently limited in scope: manually copying manuscripts was an error-prone process that, in the best of cases, produced a handful of copies of a given text (Feldbrugge 1975: 17–19). This was intentional: by replicating texts using cottage industry methods rather than industrial replication, samizdat producers were able to elude the attention of the authorities (ibid.: 17). The actual publication of texts deemed

illicit within the Soviet Union was utterly impossible, of course, given that the process of obtaining resources and distributing books would be far too public (ibid.: 19). In such circumstances, industrial publication was infeasible, and a revival of manuscript culture was the best option for reproducing illicit literature.

However, this retreat from printing press to scribe had its drawbacks – it rolled back the benefits of the Gutenberg era. As Elizabeth Eisenstein has shown, the introduction of the printing press revolutionized the European intellectual world: the introduction of standard texts replicated in myriad copies (that is, volumes printed from a single set of printing plates) granted a broad readership access to single, common text, enabling an expansion of readerships, increased transmission of information, and even, in Eisenstein's view, the birth of modern scholarly culture (Eisenstein 1993: 43–51). Briefly stated, samizdat was bereft of any of these benefits: it returned literature to the era of manuscripts, with its unreliable texts, distributed in a limited number of copies.⁶ In turn, tamizdat restaged the Gutenberg revolution, producing pristine, identical, and textually stable books.⁷ Tamizdat confronted what Akhmatova had famously described as samizdat's "pre-Gutenberg" character by returning the dissemination of illicit Soviet texts to the industrial age.

Additionally, the scale of tamizdat's industrial replication allowed authors to reach a far broader audience than samizdat could ever provide. At best, samizdat texts would be read by a few hundred individuals. While *Gulag* existed in a handful of manuscripts before its publication abroad, tamizdat operated at a completely different scale: YMCA, for example, printed five thousand copies of its *Gulag* pocket book (Morozov 1974: 17). Tamizdat's most significant comparative advantage over samizdat, then, was one of readership: it vastly eased access to texts.

Importantly, much of this expansion occurred within the Soviet Union. While tamizdat could also expand readerships abroad, of course, the prac-

6 Ann Komaromi cites Eisenstein in her reading of samizdat (Komaromi 2015: 135).

7 This stability was not trivial and was particularly important for poetry. For example, much of Filippov's and Struve's editorial labor in preparing Mandelshtam's *Sobranie sochinenii* was spent collating various samizdat copies of Mandelshtam's work in pursuit of the original. The tamizdat version, naturally, set Mandelshtam's text in stone. See Komaromi 2015: 138.

tice's special focus was a domestic, Soviet circumstance: the choice between reading manuscripts and not reading illicit texts at all. This dynamic is precisely what we see at play within the *Gulags*: both YMCA and Flegon produced volumes specifically intended to provide contraband books to Soviet readers, liberating them from the need to resort to scarce manuscripts. Accordingly, tamizdat not only enabled texts to be transformed into printed books, but did so with the particular intention of alleviating textual shortages among a specific, Soviet readership.⁸

Therefore, we are prepared to answer the question we posed at the beginning of this section. Publishing texts in the West and smuggling books into the Soviet Union – an extremely laborious enterprise – was hardly the easiest way to do things, but it was a reaction to samizdat's status quo, a stratagem meant to exploit the only means of publishing Russian texts while preserving anti-Soviet themes. In other words, publication in the West was not a means of allowing certain texts to exist or be read, but a means to allow certain texts into print, an attempt not merely to create readable literature, but an edition capable of broad dissemination. Thus, tamizdat was not a means of reading or writing – it was a *ligament* that bound and facilitated these practices. Fundamentally, it was a mode of publication meant to ease access to texts for a particular, Soviet audience.

Tamizdat as Text

Tamizdat, then, is best understood as a means of publishing, an act aimed at connecting Soviet readers with authors. We are now primed to arrive at two separate yet crucial conclusions that underscore the rest of this article.

First, we must acknowledge that tamizdat *does not constitute any sort of text*. The groundwork for this observation was laid above: we saw that tamizdat texts were frequently found in samizdat, and that texts eventually disseminated via tamizdat could be written in complete ignorance of their future fate. Thus, even at this point, we can intuit that merely treating texts as

8 See Komaromi's discussion of tamizdat as addressing a "larger community of believers" than samizdat (Komaromi 2015: 147).

“tamizdat” could be misleading, obviating the myriad trajectories and forms belonging to Russian literature before the emergence of this practice.

However, it is worthwhile to take a step back to consider the problematics inherent in understanding a means of publication via a group of texts. Fundamentally, *texts are malleable*. They can be translated, transmitted, re-written, reworked, replicated, and republished over decades, centuries, and even millennia. For instance, take the Greek and Latin classics. While these texts were written for a particular, historical audience, they eventually took on a life of their own. Greek philosophy, for example, was consumed across the ancient Mediterranean world as contemporary thought, inspired Muslim scholars during the Islamic Golden Age, provided intellectual fodder for practitioners of the Renaissance, and opened a window into mythic antiquity for the Romantics. In each of these cases, readers encountered the same texts, but their particular circumstances considerably shaped what the texts meant to them.

Crucially, this same dynamic reappears, albeit less dramatically, among those texts traditionally considered “tamizdat.” Just because publishers created editions of “tamizdat texts” for Soviet readers, this did not preclude them from publishing the same literature for other audiences. We have already seen, for example, that *Gulag* was a sensation among readers in Western Europe, who hoarded the book as an anti-Soviet totem and bought out the work’s first Russian-language edition. At that same moment, however, *Gulag* was being consumed the world over, setting a new record for multinational book sales. Indeed, *Gulag* set off a bitter dispute in France, the location of the text’s original sensational publication. The French Communist Party (PCF) used *Gulag* to vilify Solzhenitsyn, accusing the author of producing anti-communist propaganda. The major political row that followed generated deep schisms among the French left, even catalyzing a “transformation of French intellectual politics in the 1970s” (Christofferson 2004: 89–90).

As with Greek philosophy, the dynamic described here was triggered by the elasticity of texts: in a sense, it was “cheap” to publish *Gulag* across the globe, thereby introducing the text to numerous readers. In turn, this meant that the text found its way to legions of separate readerships, each of them embedded in peculiar and specific circumstances, as we saw in the French case. Fundamentally, however, this example points us to the basic tension

inherent to reading tamizdat as text: why should we necessarily link such episodes with the Soviet reception of *Gulag*? As we know, the Russian-language editions of *Gulag* – the books discussed above – were lauded and read by two separate *Russian-speaking* audiences, readers with radically different circumstances and interests from one another, let alone as compared to French communists. Why should we necessarily equate the experiences of these readerships?

Indeed, if we define tamizdat as a synecdoche for texts like *Gulag*, we eventually find ourselves in this unenviable position. If we take *Gulag* – as a text – to comprise tamizdat, any production or consumption of this text across the globe would be construed as tamizdat. Before long, this would induce scholars to analyze everything from French communists to American conservatives reading one and the same text. At best, this approach would produce a comparative study of various readerships. In turn, however, this would threaten to overwhelm the scale of tamizdat studies, moving to a level where it becomes difficult to find commonalities between varied receptions of a single text. It might be productive to think of tamizdat as a “nexus” for cross-culture interactions between East and West, as Labov and Kind-Kovács do, but such a focus has its own drawbacks (Labov/Kind-Kovács 2013: 10). This view eventually loses focus on the core component of tamizdat elaborated above: its role as ligament between author and *Soviet* reader.⁹

While the above example may seem like an exception to the norm, I would argue that *Gulag* is broadly representative of the tamizdat experience. Indeed, most “tamizdat texts” were published in multiple editions, and many were issued in at least two separate books – one for Western European émigré readers and another for Soviet audiences. We saw this with the *Gulags* above, obviously – both YMCA and Flegon followed this pattern – but this was also true for many other tamizdat publishers.¹⁰ Even Ardis (according to Ann Komaromi, a largely apolitical tamizdat publisher) provided a list of its offerings on the back cover of their paperbacks for the benefit of Soviet

9 This is essentially Andrew Wachtel’s critique of Kind-Kovács’s monograph: he argues that her study would be better divided into many separate investigations of disparate phenomena (Wachtel 2015: 456).

10 Posev, for instance, published most of its books in a “normal” edition and a pocket version (Komaromi 2013: 35).

readers; such a list was not included on hardcovers meant to remain in the West.¹¹ If we adhere to a purely textual hermeneutic, we would irrevocably bind these objects together – they contained completely identical texts, after all – but we would miss the differences between these objects and the vastly separate practices they were intended for.

Thus, we can see that defining tamizdat as a synecdoche for any sort of text – that is, defining the phenomenon *via a group of texts* – raises several interrelated issues. In short, texts transcend single audiences and appear in myriad objects intended for separate readers; an obsession with texts, consequently, dilutes our focus from the Soviet citizens who were the main concern for tamizdat. Instead, if we are to understand tamizdat, we must resort to a different hermeneutic signaled by the above books. While not all instances of *Gulag* can be considered tamizdat, there is a logic to the grouping presented in the case study. Both YMCA and Flegon printed particular *editions* of *Gulag* directed at Soviet readers. This, finally, helps us to understand the particularities of tamizdat. If we are to understand this phenomenon as a distinct movement, we should focus on its distinctive feature – as a type of publication for the benefit of a specific, *Soviet* audience – and work forward from there.

Tamizdat as Book

If we turn to tamizdat's idiosyncrasies – its intention to publish books for a particular, *Soviet* audience – we find a specific hallmark, the ineluctable imprint of such activity: a *particular type of book*. In other words, rather than turning to texts, we would best understand tamizdat by identifying a *particular type of material object*.

This conclusion is inspired by book history, particularly the thought of Roger Chartier. Over the past thirty years, book historians have developed the idea that book forms are, fundamentally, the direct reflections of specific reading publics. This follows most immediately from a fairly simple consid-

11 The lists on the back of Ardis books were meant to alert Soviet readers to other volumes they could look for in tamizdat (Komaromi 2013: 38; Proffer 2017: xviii).

eration: unlike texts, which can be republished for various audiences across the ages, books are singular objects. The wholesale replication of completely unaltered volumes is rare, meaning that it is easier to address books (rather than flexible, republishable texts) to discrete audiences.

Beyond this fact, books are, by their very nature, deeply reflective of specific readerships. Most notably, Chartier and D. F. McKenzie have described how formal variations in the design of books – for instance, their size, pagination, etc. – effectively link them with particular audiences. Chartier’s pet example is the *Bibliothèque bleue*, a type of publication that edited and repackaged French classics for a mass readership. Believing that this audience possessed a limited literacy, editors simplified texts and presented them in affordable volumes to make them attractive to a mass public. Eventually, this readership bought these books, given that the books in question spoke to their actual capacities and interests. In effect, however, this dynamic bound the editorial apparatuses of these volumes – i.e., their paratexts, edits, and physical forms – with these readers, exemplifying a relationship which holds for books as a whole. Indeed, Chartier argues that books even create their own audiences, given that their editorial apparatuses “authoriz[e] new appropriations” by allowing new readings and render texts materially accessible to “new publics.” In his words, “forms are modeled on the expectations and competencies attributed to the public at which they are aimed, [and] above all [...] works and objects produce the space of their social reception” (Chartier 2002: 53).

Much of this dynamic also stems from the fact that publishers can exploit their position within the greater network of book production to craft books for specific audiences. Unlike authors, who do not necessarily have concrete knowledge of their actual readerships (think, for example, of a posthumous publication), publishers work in immediate anticipation of shipping books to customers – that is, they have a relatively concrete idea of who might read their books.¹² This position allows publishers to directly anticipate the needs of said audience.

12 This is building upon Roger Darnton’s book cycle, which attempts to depict the adjacencies and movements of books through various circuits of production and consumption (Darnton 2002: 12).

In practice, publishers anticipate and create audiences by altering those parts of volumes that are under their purview. In short, they craft helpful paratexts. For example, following Jerome McGann, we can consider the profusely footnoted academic editions of classic texts. The footnotes are not meant for the text's original audience, obviously (such readers would not require this apparatus), but rather for those readers on whom the text's original context is lost. In effect, such labor binds the paratextual apparatus of books to specific readerships. As McGann explains, "to edit a text is to be situated in a historic relation to the work's transmissions, but it is also to be placed in an immediate relation to contemporary cultural and conceptual goals" (McGann 1991: 47). Otherwise stated, such editorial paratexts reflect the intended audience of a *book*, potentially superseding the readership implied in its text.

This dynamic transcends paratexts alone. Chartier shows that "strategies of printing [are] regulated by the competencies and expectations of the different target audiences" (Chartier 2002: 56). In other words, the book's physical qualities – the design of its cover, its size, the material it is made from, etc.; features that, like paratexts, are within the purview of publishers – also anticipate specific audiences with particular needs. The airport novel – books sold only to readers in transit for whom easy transportability is a high priority – is a modern example. These books are slightly smaller than normal paperbacks and are printed on light paper, increasing their portability and thus making them convenient to airport readers. This is not a trivial consideration: in the words of one printer, the "size" of such volumes "is an essential part of the way [these books] are distributed" (Whitehall Printing Company 2021).

Therefore, paratexts, physical forms, etc. (almost everything in a book except its text) operate as a coherent and direct reflection of a particular readership. In other words, *the entire book with the exception of its text* anticipates a specific audience. We can thus finally return to tamizdat. We have already determined that tamizdat is best understood as a means of publishing vis-à-vis a singular audience: Soviet readers. In keeping with the above considerations, we should be able to delineate tamizdat by identifying a *characteristic book form*, a type of book that is bound to tamizdat's singular audience and addresses its particular needs.

This conclusion is immediately useful insofar as it provides a concise definition of Russian-language tamizdat, according with the example elaborated

at the beginning of this article. Analyzing the four *Gulags* via a book-based lens cleanly separates the tamizdat volumes from their non-tamizdat counterparts, allowing us to confidently identify those books primarily consumed by Soviet audiences and those which were not. On the other hand, as we have seen, attempting to parse these books via textual analysis offers no such clarity.

Such a perspective also proves highly productive. This stance encourages us to look for a specific tamizdat book form, one meant to address the needs of Soviet readers. As we will see, this audience possessed one requirement first and foremost – a volume that was capable of penetrating Soviet borders, completing the desperately needed connection between writer and reader. As we will see in the final section of this article, effecting this link was a deeply difficult task, which spurred the creation of a unique, revolutionary form, a type of book I term *masquerade*.

Tamizdat as Masquerade

This article has one more task: to describe the specific book form of tamizdat. We saw that to understand books, we must identify the needs of their intended audiences. For tamizdat, which by definition harbored illicit texts and published books hundreds, if not thousands of miles away from their readers, one highly specific requirement eventually emerged at the forefront of the practice. In each and every case, all books published in tamizdat somehow had to penetrate Soviet borders without alerting authorities to the nature of their contents. Then, and only then, were these books actually read by Soviet citizens.¹³

13 Two previous scholars, Ivan Tolstoy (2017) and Aleksandr Fedin (2019), have suggested that tamizdat should be defined as books smuggled into the Soviet Union. However, neither attempted to disambiguate tamizdat books from their texts, nor developed a conception of tamizdat as a type of book functioning as a masquerade. In this sense, my study helps to establish clearer boundary lines between tamizdat and other types of publications and alerts us to the form's bibliographic significance.

Most tamizdat was smuggled into the Soviet Union by hand, unlike other types of tamizdat in the Warsaw Pact countries, which were frequently disseminated by mail (Reisch 2013: 23–38). In the estimation of Isaac Patch, the director of the CIA's program for dispatching tamizdat to the Soviet Union, thirty-five percent of tamizdat was given to Soviet visitors to the West, forty percent was given to Western travelers to the Soviet Union, and fifteen percent was transmitted by "special routes" like diplomatic pouches; only ten percent was sent by mail (ibid.: 507). In effect, and unlike other types of tamizdat, this meant that roughly seventy-five percent of tamizdat sent into the Soviet Union had to survive an encounter with a border guard, a direct confrontation in which guard and book were in the same space. Given that such smuggling was a precondition for the consumption of these books, the fundamental need among Russian-language tamizdat's audience was a type of book that could survive an encounter with the Soviet authorities – a unique requirement bound up with a unique audience.

Eventually, tamizdat publishers seem to have collectively hit upon a solution to this problem: if the book encapsulating a text moved inconspicuously through a space or projected an inconspicuous air, it could survive the encounter with a guard. In other words, subverting preconceived notions of an illicit text by engendering innocuous impressions via a certain *book form* could enable the transmission of tamizdat into the Soviet Union, thus completing the link between author and reader.

This dynamic is what we see at play in the tamizdat *Gulags*. The Flegon book is the more explicit case: in making Solzhenitsyn's text look like a bona fide Soviet book, Flegon attempted to differentiate casual impressions of his book as legitimate Soviet fare from the blatantly anti-communist character of its text. Of course, the text retains its politically problematic stance, but the paratexts (most notably, the imprint and the colophon) surrounding it – that is, the book minus its text – convey a separate impression so that it can be smuggled successfully. Taken as a whole, the object is practically absurd, but when interpreted in light of its mission, the book comes into focus. The YMCA *Gulag* works along similar, though slightly more subtle lines. Through miniaturization, YMCA attempted to ensure that its book was not noticed at all, allowing it to be hidden in a pocket or at the bottom of a suitcase. This tactic follows the same logic as Flegon used: by convincing

observers that a hidden book is absent from a space, the book in question again effects a disjunction between appearance and actual reality.

Together, the above examples speak to tamizdat's fundamental pattern. In an attempt to satisfy its audience's needs for smuggleable books, tamizdat aimed to modulate how entire books were interpreted by observers, to mask literature by changing how the book object, as distinct from its text, was read. In other words, tamizdat created books that engendered disjunctions between the impressions they made and their content in order to aid the smuggling of literature into the Soviet Union. In a sense, this constitutes a *masquerade*: the word draws attention to the radical separation between the appearance of these books and the nature of their contents.

As at a good party, masquerade can employ a variety of masks. As tamizdat primarily aimed to disguise its contents, it could – and did – achieve this goal in a variety of ways. Indeed, the YMCA and Flegon *Gulags* are separate manifestations of this common impulse. YMCA used miniaturization while Flegon used false imprints, but both publishers simply disguised Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag* by employing masquerade. If we broaden our scope, we can see that there is a large group of books that display the same kind of bibliographic playfulness. Some tamizdat publications lacked covers, while others played with the size of the book, and still others attempted to avoid paratexts altogether, presenting blank rectangular prisms to the world.¹⁴ Publishers could be blunt (by simply miniaturizing their texts) and others could be crafty, but all attempted to disguise their books from the Soviet authorities. For example, Filippov and Struve purposely accentuated the academic appearance of the 1964 Mandelshtam *Sobranie sochinenii* to facilitate involvement in library exchanges, thus allowing the book to be imported into the Soviet Union despite its problematic content.¹⁵ In any case, the *Gulags*, the Mandelshtam

14 Ivan Tolstoy (2017: 57–59) has compiled a list of several such books.

15 In reference to Clarence Brown's English-language introduction to the Mandelshtam collected works, Filippov (1964) wrote: "I'm only saying that the ENGLISH articles are needed more for the reader OVER THERE [*tamoshnego chitatelia*] than the reader HERE [*tutoshnego chitatelia*]. Such a book will be much more 'successful' if it is designed for a LOCAL [*zdeshego*], international, and not SOVIET reader, and it will be easier for a Soviet reader to receive such a book if it doesn't have the image of a book printed consciously for that side. Thus the NAME [of the contri-

collected works, and numerous other tamizdat books have one basic thing in common: they attempted to obfuscate the nature of their contents – that is, they employed masquerade – in order to reach a Soviet readership.

Conclusion

Together, the case of the four *Gulags* provides us with four important take-aways regarding the nature of tamizdat. First, texts per se are an inadequate means of understanding this phenomenon: as we have seen, a textual lens would emphasize the text shared by all four of these books and obscure their stark differences. Second, tamizdat is better seen as a type of bibliographic ligament between authors and readers that would have been impossible via official channels and impractical via samizdat. Third, due to both the nature of publishing and the pressures stemming from the need to smuggle volumes into the Soviet Union, Russian tamizdat employed an idiosyncratic book form – masquerade – that serves as a hallmark for the practice. Finally, this masquerading impulse could manifest itself in a variety of ways, as seen in the different strategies employed by the Flegon and YMCA *Gulags*.

These four conclusions have broader implications. If we see tamizdat as a movement in which publishers separated books from texts – that is, in which book forms were crafted in direct opposition to their contents – we can read tamizdat as a sort of postmodern turn in the world of publishing, a collective manipulation of the nature and import of typically implicit book publishing conventions. We can see this mindset reflected, for example, in Flegon's manipulation of the humble imprint, a move that displays a profound understanding of a largely ignored paratext. This, in turn, implies that tamizdat may have much to tell us about the form of the book itself, given that its volumes estrange typical publishing forms and consequently lay bare the

butor writing the preface] is not important, but it is important that we do not use a RUSSIAN name or a name well known there. [...] It would be very good if we are successful in receiving [...] the imprint of some university. I will think about this. But the main thing is that we have an 'American-Russian' image: it will greatly aid the 'maneuverability' there: it's already been tried [all capitalization original]."

inner workings of these norms. Tamizdat is thus a truly radical form, but its distinctiveness only comes into focus when it is understood as a masquerade.

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Giuseppina Larocca

Publishing Dissident Soviet Literature in Italy: The Case of Jaca Book (1966–1986)

Abstract: This essay presents a panorama of Italian publishing from the 1960s to the 1980s in relation to the translation and dissemination of Russian and Soviet literature. Particular attention is paid to Jaca Book, an imprint founded in Milan in 1966 by university students. They had strong links with the Charles Péguy Catholic Center, which focused on translating dissident Russian and Soviet literature into Italian.

Keywords: Russian and Soviet literature, Italian literature, Sergio Rapetti, Charles Péguy Center, Italian publishing history

Utopias and Synthesis: Italian Publishing and Russian-Soviet Literature from the Sixties to the Eighties

Between the 1960s and the 1980s, Italy was in search of its cultural identity, as were many of its European counterparts. Feeling the effects of a complicated international context and of its own troubled national political experience, Italy went through several changes. In these circumstances, the editorial panorama consisted of different literary and social voices and aspirations, reflecting the “noises” of the time in literary production, including translated literature. Publishers such as Einaudi, Mondadori, Garzanti, Feltrinelli, and, later, Jaca Book were actively involved in the process, including through their support of Soviet literary dissidence. Publications of works such as *Doctor Zhivago* by Boris Pasternak, *V krughe pervom* (*The First Circle*), and *Odin den’ Ivana Denisovicha* (*One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*) by Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, and *Zhizn’ i sud’ba* (*Life and Fate*) by Vasily Grossman gave Italian readers a new sense of Soviet contemporary literature and contributed to intellectual and literary debates in Italy itself.

During this period, despite the various transformations within the national culture, literature still fulfilled its function, as Italo Calvino wrote in 1955, “of looking at our neighbors and ourselves, of linking personal and general facts, of attributing value to small or big things, of considering our own limits and vices and those of others, of finding the proportions of life”¹ (Calvino 1980: 14–15). What was needed then was a change aimed at defining the country’s new cultural identity after the Fascist era, the war (which had also been a civil war), and the pull and push factors of the 1950s.

During the 1960s, Italy was taken by storm by a climate of public protests that would eventually create new generations of writers keen on experimenting, both nationally and abroad. The international landscape would also see the birth of a new world order and a renewed discussion around literary genres, both influenced by the upheavals that rattled the political and social arenas. Despite their individual differences, young Italian writers took a moment to reflect on the events of the previous decade in Hungary, the 1968 political upheaval in France, and the revolts in Prague and Eastern Europe. They needed to find within this historical evolution a new place for the individual, who would be a tireless researcher of ethical and social values now at odds with their heritage. The controversy revolved not only around neorealism and hermeticism, but also around the Italian cultural legacy of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. “Human beings,” wrote Angelo Guglielmi, a major theorist and key figure of Group 63, “are no longer in front of reality, but inside of it” (Guglielmi 1964: 47) and, consequently, “the contemporary artwork is not a mirror that, as such, we position in front of the object it needs to reflect; it is now a factory manufacturing reality and, at the same time, its own product”² (ibid.: 48).

Therefore, the publishing landscape of those decades went through a sudden change, attempting to make room for the neo-avant-garde, such as Group 63 in Italy, or for European voices, such as *Tel Quel* magazine in

1 “di guardare il prossimo e se stessi, di porre in relazione fatti personali e fatti generali, di attribuire valore a piccole cose o a grandi, di considerare i propri limiti e vizi e gli altrui, di trovare le proporzioni della vita.”

2 “L’uomo non è più di fronte alla realtà, ma è dentro di essa. [...] l’opera d’arte moderna non è uno specchio, che in quanto tale, si pone di fronte all’oggetto che deve riflettere, ma è la fabbrica della realtà e, insieme, il suo prodotto.”

France. Publication and new publishing series devoted to translated foreign literary works were numerous. It was this very overture towards other literary paradigms, which included contemporary Soviet literature, that enabled the creation of a new identity. Those were the years, therefore, of the birth, strengthening, and reformulation of entire publishing series. The first such series, I coralli (1947) by Einaudi – the headquarters for politically committed Italian and foreign novelists (Turi 1997: 403) – was dedicated to translations of contemporary Soviet literature, such as *Ottepel'* by Il'ia Erenburg (*Il disgelo*, 1955; eng. *The Thaw*) and Viktor Nekrasov's *V rodnom gorode* (*Nella città natale*, 1955; eng. *In the Hometown*). The second such series, the prestigious Le Comete (Feltrinelli, 1959), was home to the young poets Evgeny Evtushenko and Andrei Voznesensky. Feltrinelli also published I Narratori di Feltrinelli (1960), a series that, while reprinting *Doctor Zhivago* (originally published in the Narrativa series) turned to the politically *non-aligned* past of the 1920s by publishing Isaak Babel' and Boris Pilniak (Ferretti/Iannuzzi 2014: 192). Mondadori, via its series Medusa (founded in 1933) and, later, Scrittori italiani e stranieri (1968), published, respectively, *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov (1958), a bestseller that sold more copies than Lampedusa's *The Leopard* (Tarabbia 2013: 43), published the same year, and the aforementioned *The First Circle* (*Primo cerchio*, 1968) by Solzhenitsyn (Ferretti/Iannuzzi 2014: 231). Finally, Garzanti per tutti (Garzanti for Everyone), a series devoted, as indicated by its very title, to a wide audience, published the novels of Nobel laureate Mikhail Sholokhov.

It became clear during the 1959 Frankfurt Book Fair that the Italian publishing houses were trying to assume an active role in the market and to consistently bring solid projects home (Ferretti 2004: 159–160). We must consider the fact that they found themselves working in a very competitive Italian and international context; moreover, they had been affected by cultural, social, and economic changes that reshaped their internal organization. Contrary to the previous decade's trend, instead of choosing a cultural editor who was also a prestigious scholar (such as Elio Vittorini or Calvino), the publishing houses started to prefer managers who followed the rules of marketing and

already had business careers, whether in publishing or not.³ The frenzied period starting with the 1960s brought a clearer definition of what Bourdieu called the “literary field” – the space occupied by books in the publishing world (Bourdieu 1995: 215–227) and, in our case, in the Italian one. A book began to be regarded not just as a “manufactured object,” a mere object to be marketed, but also as a “manufactured object promoted to the dignity of an art object by the artist’s symbolic stroke” (ibid.: 246–247). A book became an authoritative tool that, placed on the “market of symbolic goods,” had the power to culturally and politically mark editorial choices, thus engaging the interests of an ever-growing, multi-faceted reading public (Ferretti 2004: 161).

It was at this moment in time that a number of affinities linked to book production, along with political and ideological orientation, became more visible – and this applied to translations as well. During the post-war period, two models of literary production competed for the dominant position in the Italian literary world – the American and French models (Sisto 2007: 87). However, it was in the 1960s that other literatures already present in the previous decades renegotiated their position. This was what happened to Russian and Soviet literature, which had already featured more systematically in Italy since the 1920s thanks to the translations of Ettore Lo Gatto, as well as to the budding field of Italian Slavic studies, to many émigré translators, and to publishing houses such as Alfredo Polledro’s *Slavia*. We should add, however, that this new direction was also due to the controversial anthology *Il fiore del verso russo* (*The Flower of Russian verse*, 1949), edited by Renato Poggioli, a book that sparked a heated political debate, and to the collection *Poesia russa del Novecento* (*Nineteenth-Century Russian Poetry*, 1954), edited by Angelo Maria Ripellino.⁴

In the early 1950s, established houses such as Einaudi, Mondadori and Garzanti began promoting the Russian-Soviet literary space by publishing nineteenth-century classics, translated directly from the original Russian without the mediation of other languages. The slate of authors included not

3 A notable example was Gianni Ferrauto, a new figure who ran the Rizzoli publishing house until 1970. See Ferretti 2004: 159.

4 There is a rich scholarly literature on the role of Slavic studies in Italy, émigré translators, and their endeavors. See Adamo 2000; Béghin 2007 and 2009; Béghin / Rocci 2009; Garetto 2015, 2019a and 2019b; Garzonio 2016; and Sulpasso 2017.

only Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Goncharov, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Chekhov, but also Kuprin, Pilniak, Bunin, and Mandelshtam.

These authors were promoted as part of the process of elaborating an increasingly mobile canon that took into consideration the contemporary literary polyphony in the Soviet Union and its troubled relationship with the regime. In general, this heightened interest in contemporary literature was conditioned by the absence of regulations protecting intellectual property, mainly due to the fact that the USSR did not adhere to the Berne Convention (and its further revisions), and therefore left copyright disputes wide open. According to the Berne Convention, if a European or American publisher printed a text within thirty days of its publication in the country of origin, it would secure exclusive rights for the western market. This meant that, during this period, any western publisher could print their own editions of Soviet works without exclusive rights or any obligations to pay royalties (Feltrinelli 2001: 99; Cesana 2010: 222). As a consequence, many publishing houses embarked on a race to secure exclusive foreign publication rights.

After the foundation of Feltrinelli in 1955, and, more specifically, after the Pasternak affair, the attitude towards Soviet literature set in motion attempts to define publishing policies. Moreover, the worldwide publication of *Doctor Zhivago* was a game changer. Calvino wrote to Ripellino that Giulio Einaudi was restless (Cesana 2010: 222) and wanted to regain momentum by entrusting the young Vittorio Strada (his collaborator since 1954, living at the time in Moscow) with the task of identifying compelling works of Russian-Soviet literature. Garzanti and Mondadori, on the other hand, were characterized by a more “traditional” outlook and turned to consultants such as the Florentine Slavist Anton Maria Raffo, who worked mainly for Mondadori. Everyone worked at translating and retranslating nineteenth-century literature, while also looking for successful phenomena in foreign contemporary literature to import back to Italy.

The publication in Italy of Solzhenitsyn’s *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was an editorial event on a par with the story surrounding the publication of *Doctor Zhivago*. Published in *Novyi Mir* in 1962, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* attracted the attention of foreign publishers, leading Garzanti and Einaudi into a competition to publish it in Italy that was unexpectedly won by the former (Saltamacchia 2015: 289–390). Translated by

Giorgio Kraiski, Garzanti's 1963 version was an instant success, generating numerous reprints: it was reprinted twice in the same year, then again in 1970, 1971 and, finally, in 1974. In the 1960s, Garzanti tackled experimental contemporary Russian literature, including the unofficial variety, in an attempt to restructure its image without betraying the "traditional" profile inherited from Treves, the publishing house Aldo Garzanti had acquired in 1938 (Turi 1997: 399). Between the 1960s and the 1980s, the number of Russian and Soviet titles released by Garzanti that belonged to the vast and diverse panorama of dissident culture and the literature of testimony grew considerably. In addition to Solzhenitsyn, whose *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* was followed in 1974 by *Rakovyi korpus* (*Divisione Cancro*; eng. *Cancer Ward*), Italian readers now had access to the literary voices of poets and writers such as Andrei Siniavsky and Evgeny Popov, bard poets like Bulat Okudzhava, and Elena Bonner, wife of the Nobel laureate Andrei Sakharov, along with more complex experiences, such as those provided by the tamizdat journal *Kontinent*.⁵

Starting in the early 1970s, the climate of Italian publishing was renewed again, growing increasingly attentive to expanding its market and its international connections, and working diligently on achieving an ideological consensus (Ferretti 2004: 226–227). Garzanti at this point turned their attention to abrasive writers, important representatives of the literature of the thirties, such as Mikhail Bulgakov and Osip Mandelshtam (Mandel'shtam 1972), while still keeping the spotlight on Pasternak by publishing his correspondence with his cousin Olga Freidenberg (Pasternak/Freidenberg 1987).⁶

After beating Garzanti in the race to publish *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Einaudi continued in the 1950s and 1960s the energetic planning put in place in the post-war years (including their plans for Russian-Soviet literature), despite the financial crisis and the general internal changes it went through. Einaudi remained politically militant, albeit with a critical attitude

5 Sinjavskij 1980; 1987; Popov 1990; Okudzhava 1975; Bonner 1986; Kontinent 1975.

6 In 1973, similarly to what had previously done by the publisher Di Donato, linked to Italian Communist Party university groups, Garzanti reprinted an equally abridged version of *Master i Margarita* (The Master and Margarita; Bulgakov 1973) and, later, during perestroika, a single-volume edition of *Rokovye iaitsa* (The Fatal Eggs) and *Sobach'e serdtse* (Heart of a Dog); Bulgakov 1990.

towards the Italian Communist Party after the Hungarian Uprising (Mangoni 1999: 848, 858–864, 930). The 1963 publication of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* in the series I coralli (Solzhenitsyn 1963) happened also thanks to the mediation of the journalist and writer Raffaello Ubaldi, Moscow correspondent for the newspaper *Il Giorno*.

In the space of one year, Solzhenitsyn's book was reprinted several times (Mazzucchelli 2019: 876), securing for its author the image of a very coveted writer. A few years later, Einaudi would publish both in Russian and in Italian his *Cancer Ward*, originally published anonymously in 1968 by *Il Saggiatore* (ibid.: 877).

The hype around dissident literature and other Russian authors characterized the period from the late sixties to the seventies. In 1977, Einaudi published a collection of prose writings by Yuri Trifonov, an exponent of the official opposition literature of the seventies, titled *Lo scambio. Conclusioni provvisorie. Lungo addio (Obmen. Predvaritel'nye itogi. Dolgoe proshchanie; eng. The Exchange. Provisional Conclusions. Long Farewell)*, alongside Soviet authors such as Veniamin Kaverin (1966), but also a book by Nikita Khrushchev (Chruscev 1964). Arnoldo Mondadori, another important publisher, gained prestige in the same period with the first international edition of *Krutoi marshrut (Journey into the Whirlwind)* by Evgenia Ginzburg (1967), adding also the name of the aforementioned Nekrasov to its roster of authors. Feltrinelli, on the other hand, Pasternak's leading publisher in Italy and abroad,⁷ published anthologies intended for a wider audience, such as the collection *Poesia russa del Novecento (Russian Poetry of the Twentieth Century, 1960)* edited by Ripellino, included in *Universale Economica Feltrinelli*, a series that included writers from the first half of the century, from Velimir Khlebnikov and Anna Akhmatova to Nikolai Zabolotsky and Aleksandr Tvardovsky (Ripellino 1960). The Milanese publisher, moreover, promoted the unofficial culture of the 1920s thanks to the publication of Lo Gatto's translation (1963) of *My (We)* by Evgeny Zamiatin and of authors such as Pilniak, Konstantin Paustovsky, and even Alexander Herzen, the latter two

7 During the sixties, aside from reprints of *Doctor Zhivago*, some collections of Pasternak's poems were published, such as Pasternak 1958 and 1967.

published in the series I narratori di Feltrinelli and Biblioteca di letteratura, respectively.

Feltrinelli paid particular attention to Isaak Babel', and the volume *Lettere alla madre e alla sorella* (*Letters to His Mother and His Sister*) was dubbed by critics "a literary thunderbolt" that "follows and recalls, or wants to recall, the clamor of the 'Pasternak affair'" (Cesana 2010: 469–470). Indeed, Feltrinelli held the worldwide copyrights to this work and continued the "Babel' line" inaugurated in 1958 with *Tramonto. Racconti. Opere per il teatro e per il cinema* (*Sunset: Stories and Works for the Cinema and Theater*), promoting Babel' to readers with the anthology of unpublished works *Racconti proibiti e lettere intime* (*Forbidden Tales and Intimate Letters*), as translated by Maria Olsufieva and Lia Wainstein, who were increasingly committed to the cause.⁸ Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, a publisher and a man of culture characterized by a strong political commitment, undoubtedly found it important to operate along two vectors: the past, represented by the literature of disgraced authors, and the contemporary production of poets like Evtushenko and Voznesensky, published in translation in the 1960s. In the chaotic universe of books, Feltrinelli was guided by newly formed aesthetic and moral sensibilities of an Italian readership that, since the 1960s, had been torn between the exploration of utopias and a desire to translate them into concrete terms. The two major historical factors influencing the world of publishing were the reactions of the Italian Communist Party to the Hungarian Uprising and a new awareness among the emergent mass readership. Einaudi and Feltrinelli, two proponents of cultural Marxism in Italy, had to adjust to the changed historical context and to a readership more and more partial to Soviet literary dissidence.

In the 1970s, the publishing market went through a further phase that involved rethinking the "traditional" intellectual's role. Once identified as a political activist dishing out harsh criticism to historical, political and even literary phenomena, and at the same time an innovator, capable of shrewdly

8 Feltrinelli released Babel' in the series Narrativa, first with a collection of his tales and then, in 1965, with *Konarmiia* (*The Red Cavalry*; Babel' 1958 (reprinted in 1961); Babel' 1965). Pilniak was introduced to the Feltrinelli catalog in 1965. See Pilniak 1965; Cesana 2010: 469–473.

interpreting cultural transformations, the “traditional” intellectual became less relevant in a society growing more and more massified (Ragone 1999: 217). An unwavering interest in contemporary Soviet literature, however, continued to permeate Italian culture, culminating in the controversial 1977 Venice Biennale, which was dedicated to dissent in eastern countries, and was suffocated by overbearing Soviet interference.

In 1977, Einaudi published the anthology *Dissenso e socialismo: una voce marxista del samizdat sovietico* (*Dissent and Socialism: A Marxist Voice from Soviet Samizdat*), edited by Vittorio Strada and featuring essays by intellectuals belonging to the socialist and Marxist currents of dissent, most notably, the historian Roi Medvedev. Among all the underground writers, the Turin publishing house chose Yury Dombrovsky, who had been arrested several times and was a victim of violent persecution. In *Facoltà di cose inutili* (*Fakul'tet nenuzhnykh veshchei*; eng. *The Faculty of Useless Knowledge*), published in 1978 in Paris and in 1979 in Italian by Einaudi (Mazzucchelli 2019), Dombrovsky talks about his own experience of arrest and imprisonment in the Kolyma labor camps. In general, the seventies were immersed in circumstances that Gabriele Turi defines as “schizophrenic,” due to the rapid growth in number of new publishing houses (Turi 1997: 442), such as Guanda and Savelli, that published dissident literature. These two new publishers released, respectively, an anthology of works by Bella Akhmadulina, translated and edited by Serena Vitale (Akhmadulina 1971), and a selection of short stories from Varlam Shalamov's *Kolymskie rasskazy* (*Kolyma Tales*), translated by Piero Sinatti (1976). However, many established publishing houses printed similar works, such as Mondadori, which released Andrei Platonov's *Chevangur*, thanks to the intercession of Nikita Struve. Although it must be remarked that in the past, and despite the positive reviews of its in-house readers, Mondadori had always hesitated to publish Platonov (Tarabbia 2013: 39, 43).

In the eighties, book publishing went through a production and profitability crisis that was overcome only in 1985 thanks to radical restructuring and management rationalization (Turi 1997: 436–437; Ferretti 2004: 242–243). The crisis involved not only Italian fiction, but also foreign literature, limiting publications to the classics of the nineteenth century and the 1920s (for example, Babel' and Pilniak). On the other hand, works of literary criticism

focusing on semiotics and structuralism, as well as the neo-formalism of the Moscow-Tartu school, remained a strong asset. In 1989, the new publishing house Guerini e Associati published a collection of poems by Okudzhava (Okudzhava 1989). However, we must take into consideration the crisis of the novel in Italy between the late 1970s and the early 1980s, with the exception of a few isolated cases (for example, Umberto Eco's *Name of the Rose*, 1980), and the overall interest in new literary genres (Ferretti 2004: 243–248). Einaudi published translations of many works by Mikhail Bakhtin, who found in Italy wide popularity and acclaim among academics in search of new theories. Feltrinelli kept publishing nineteenth-century novelists and writers (such as Dostoevsky and Chekhov), but also a few poets from the twentieth century, such as Marina Tsvetaeva. Feltrinelli reprinted *Doctor Zhivago* and, in keeping with the interest in literary theory of that time, they published *La semiotica nei paesi slavi: programmi, problemi, analisi* (*Semiotics in Slavic Countries: Programs, Problems, Analysis*, 1979), an anthology featuring essays by Viktor Shklovsky, Yuri Lotman, Jan Mukařovský, and others. The publications of the eighties were symptomatic of a crisis in the ideological approach and the ability of writers to present a unified vision of the world, thereby foreshadowing the creation of a new society and culture (Ragone 1999: 226–227). The coming historical and political transformations would generate intense shocks and new approaches, along with technological challenges. They would also advance the entertainment market at the expense of ideological and ethical identities (ibid.: 453). However, unexpected surprises would shape this multi-faceted and ever-changing context, shedding light once again on the publishing of the Soviet literature of dissent in Italy.

“The ‘One-Dimensional Man’ Is Never a Fully Actualized Model”: Jaca Book and Russian-Soviet Literature

Unlike the heterogeneous front embodied by the aforementioned publishing houses, Jaca Book belongs to the Catholic publishing industry and is part of an older tradition, uninterrupted by Fascism, focused on religious books intended mostly for grammar school pupils (Turi 1997: 410). Among its publications, there are the magazines *Famiglia Cristiana* (founded in 1933 and still

active after the war) and *Epoca*, an illustrated magazine modelled on *Life* that was launched in 1950 by Mondadori with an “anti-communist, but objective and democratic” outlook (“anticomunista, ma obiettiva e democratica”; *ibid.*: 410). Catholic publishing operates within important infrastructures, such as the Union of Italian Catholic Publishers, whose national conference started in 1953, the year the magazine *Libri d'oggi* was founded. A few of the publishing houses belonging to the union included Cinque Lune (founded in 1955 and close to the Italian Christian Democratic Party), Vita e Pensiero, and Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, founded in 1942 by Fr. Giuseppe De Luca (*ibid.*: 409–410). However, with the exception of the latter two, these Catholic publishers showed no particular and systematic interest towards philosophy and culture, underscoring their mission of providing young school-age readers with religious reading matter (*ibid.*: 410). In 1974, the founders of Jaca Book, a Milanese publishing house created in 1966, denounced these ideological limitations in a statement of self-critique: “The copious amount of Catholic publishing was de facto limiting Catholic publishers to producing books around Christian ‘topics.’ At that time, we ourselves didn’t know the first thing about De Luca’s experience with Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura”⁹ (Autobiografia 1974: 4). The Second Vatican Council drew a clear line in the sand in order to renew the Catholic outlook, therefore prompting the foundation of new publishing houses, such as Jaca Book, focused on ethical and social issues, especially in the Third World, Latin America, and Eastern Europe. Moreover, as part of the reform of the Curia by Pope Paul VI, the 1966 *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* (List of Prohibited Books) was definitively suppressed, although publications still needed the Curia’s approval for the purposes of ecclesiastical law (Bongiolatti 2017: 136). Jaca Book operated in this climate and, as part of a publishing world involving major competitors such as Einaudi, Feltrinelli, Garzanti, and Mondadori, strove to offer a competitive alternative catalog, and, above all, a clear cultural identity.

Jaca Book was undoubtedly among the publishing houses of the 1960s–1980s that shed light on the Soviet Union’s clandestine literature, al-

9 “un’abbondante produzione di editoria cattolica di fatto riduceva l’essere editori cattolici a produrre libri di ‘argomento’ cristiano. Dell’esperienza di De Luca con le edizioni di Storia e Letteratura noi per primi eravamo, allora, ignoranti.”

though it has never been really noticed by a scholarly community more interested in the archives of older publishers that had cultural activist pasts, passionately putting their catalogs and documents under a magnifying glass.

Created by a group of friends and university students who shared “the same experience of a Christian community” (“una stessa esperienza di comunità cristiana”; *Autobiografia* 1974: 6), including Sante Bagnoli, Maretta Campi, Laura Geronazzo, and Paolo Mangini, Jaca Book was always quite close to Fr. Luigi Giussani and the Charles Péguy Cultural Center, established in 1964 in Milan with the aim of “fulfilling the mission of presenting the Christian message in an objective way in the cultural arena”¹⁰ (Bongiolatti 2017: 17). The founders of the publishing house said that the name Jaca Book was chosen quite haphazardly, “the evening before we had to go notarize the charter, with the precise desire of avoiding any activist connotations”¹¹ (*Autobiografia* 1974: 5), and with the intent of distinguishing themselves from the political engaged celebrities of contemporary Italian publishing. The name “jaca” (“a kind of bread tree”) was chosen, supplemented by the English word “book,” in order to underscore their desire to “work internationally” (*ibid.*), something they did by crossing the borders of the Iron Curtain.¹²

It must certainly not have been easy to navigate the aggressive publishing market of the sixties, a very productive one in terms of contemporary Soviet literature. From its very first steps, Jaca Book looked at samizdat not only as an experience they wanted to make public, but also as a phenomenon to be defended, “especially in its ability to renew the Christian community” (“specie nelle sue capacità di rinnovamento della comunità Cristiana”; *ibid.*: 6). According to Jaca Book’s founders, this attitude was poorly received by the Christian community, intent on attacking Jaca Book for “mixing the devil with holy water,” as they say in Italy, and badly received by the Italian left, determined to stigmatize their entire publishing endeavor as one that wanted

10 “assolvere nel campo culturale il ruolo di presentare in senso oggettivo il messaggio cristiano.”

11 “la sera prima di presentarsi dal notaio con la precisa volontà di non trovare alcuna denominazione impegnata.”

12 The literature on this subject is extensive, of course. See, in this case, Kind-Kovács/Labov 2013 and Kind-Kovács 2014, especially chapter three, “Tamizdat Border Crossings” (217–330).

“just to tell tales or [engage in] mere Christian Democratic anti-communism propaganda” (“raccontare storie o fare del facile anticomunismo democristiano”; *ibid.*: 4).

However, Jaca Book and the Péguy Center also had moments of open disagreement. During a meeting in the spring of 1967 in particular, Sante Bagnoli, director of the publishing house, denounced the center’s lack of involvement in Italian cultural life and advocated for a more markedly religious identity in its cultural activities (Bongiolatti 2017: 225). A little later, in November 1967, these very same accusations were repeated in Urbino during a meeting at which the founders of Jaca Book reiterated to the Péguy Center the importance of opening up to society, of confronting society through books, which had to be regarded not “as idols,” but “as tools” (*ibid.*: 186). For these reasons, Jaca Book launched a discussion around the concepts of “Catholic publishing” and “revolution” (*ibid.*), trying to understand how Catholic books could analyze and understand contemporary history and contribute to social and cultural transformation via the Christian message. The first concept expressed the need to come to terms with their religious background, while the second referred to the dominant theme of the 1960s: confronting the great contemporary social issues – class exploitation, freedom of expression, totalitarianism – at the center of debates in the journals and in books published by Einaudi, Feltrinelli, Mondadori, and others. The young people at Jaca Book believed that restricting the publishing house to religious topics (in their opinion, the predominant approach within Catholic circles; *ibid.*: 186, 315) was too narrow an approach. They were convinced that it was necessary to be culturally active in a world not only overwhelmed by ideological struggles, but also characterized by profound experiences, like the ones in the USSR, where the fate of an entire people was at stake.

This was why the emphasis on freedom of expression, samizdat, and Soviet dissent was so important for the founders of Jaca Book. In 1966, they inaugurated their endeavor by publishing a book entitled *Testi letterari e poesie da riviste clandestine dell’Unione Sovietica* (*Literary Texts and Poems from Clandestine Journals of the Soviet Union*), an anthology of works (mainly poems) selected from the samizdat periodicals *Sintaksis*, *Feniks*, and *Sfinksy*.¹³

13 For an overview of these publications, see Lygo 2010: 60–62; Parisi 2013: 27, 256, 282.

The main reference points for this collection, and in general for the world of dissidence, were the Italian-Russian groups active at that time in Milan, and the Centro Studi di Russia Cristiana (Christian Russia Study Center), founded there in 1957 and devoted to studying the conditions of Soviet believers (especially Roman Catholics). The center was spearheaded by Fr. Romano Scalfi, protoiereus at the Trento Cathedral and scholar of Russian culture at the Pontifical Oriental Institute. Sergio Rapetti (born 1941) was Jaca Book's leading expert on contemporary Soviet literature and its dissemination. He was then a student, but would later become a scholar of Russian literature and culture, translating works by Solzhenitsyn, Siniavsky, and Shalamov. As Rapetti himself would reveal in a March 2019 interview, his Russian origins gave him great linguistic and cultural sensitivity. In 1938, in fact, his mother and grandmother had been forced to leave the Soviet Union and relocate to Milan, "without the head of the family who, in the spring of that year, was arrested in a roundup as part of the Great Terror in Kislovodsk, on the slopes of the Caucasus, and then transferred to a prison in Batumi, never to return"¹⁴ (Larocca/Pieralli 2019). Rapetti contributed to the idea of a collection devoted to samizdat literary journals thanks to his close relationships with émigré intellectuals and publishing houses, such as Posev in Frankfurt, and the political-literary journal *Grani*, YMCA Press, and *Vestnik RKhD* (*Herald of the Russian Christian Movement*) in Paris, which were the main outlets for non-aligned culture outside the Soviet Union. He had also established long-lasting friendships with Vladimir Maksimov, editor-in-chief of *Kontinent*, an authoritative periodical of Russian émigré intellectuals, and Soviet dissident Natalya Gorbanevskaya (ibid.).

The 1966 samizdat literary anthology consisted almost entirely of poems by young voices from the Soviet literary landscape, including Muscovite writers such as Genrikh Sapgir and Bella Akhmadulina, the bard poet Bulat Okudzhava, and Leningrad poets such as Joseph Brodsky, Alexandr Kushner, and Dmitry Bobyshev, all of whom were eager to experiment with the phonetic and symbolic potential of words in a time of open social and politi-

14 "senza il capofamiglia che nella primavera di quell'anno, a Kislovodsk, alle pendici del Caucaso, dove abitavano, fu arrestato in una tornata del Grande Terrore e trasferito in carcere a Batumi, da dove non aveva più fatto ritorno".

cal conflict (even though, as the editors emphasized in the introduction, this trend should not be considered as a consistent signature style for the lyric poets in the anthology; Sorin/Ibsen 1966: 10). The editors (or, better yet, the compilers, given the nature of the selection, aimed above all at giving proper space to poetry) adopted curious nicknames that sounded like pseudonyms: Giovanni Bensi was the real person behind “Jean Ibsen” (Jean is a clear translation of his first name, while Ibsen is a creative anagram of his surname) while Nicola Sorin was one of Rapetti’s aliases.¹⁵ Bensi was a journalist with a background in Slavic studies, and, starting in 1991, the Russian correspondent for *Avvenire*.

In their introduction, Rapetti and Bensi were determined to introduce Italian readers, who at the time were completely unaware of the phenomenon of samizdat journals and the value of clandestine poetry in general, to major trends in contemporary Russian literature, to methods, themes, motifs, and their literary origins. They wrote a few words of warning to prevent readers from making possible erroneous interpretations:

At the root of this revolt and of these social issues there are, almost always, existential issues. This last attitude, peculiar and possibly exclusive to *Sintaksis*, characterizes *Feniks* and *Sfinksy* as well. [...] It is a revolt against conventions human beings employ when in front of others or themselves. This state of mind of the young unofficial Soviet literary production is a sign of the evolution of a problematic sensitivity at the existential level of the individual. [...] The most serious mistakes that we could make in this anthology would be either seeing in this revolt a distant desire to replace the Soviet world with institutional forms of the current western world, or seeing incompleteness, pure ambition.

Alla base della rivolta e delle istanze sociali si tratta, quasi continuamente, di rivolta e di istanze esistenziali. Quest’ultimo atteggiamento, peculiare e tendenzialmente esclusivo in “Sintaksis”, resta determinante

15 For a bio-bibliographical profile by Sergio Rapetti himself and a personal testimony to his work disseminating dissent, see the webpage <https://www.culturedeldissenso.com/sergio-rapetti/> (4/28/2021).

in “Feniks” e “Sfinksy”. [...] Rivolta da una convenzione di cui l’individuo fa uso sia nelle relazioni, sia con se stesso. Questo stato d’animo della giovane produzione letteraria sovietica non ufficiale è segno di un evolversi della sensibilità problematica sul piano esistenziale della persona. [...] Gli errori più gravi che potremmo fare di fronte alla presente antologia sarebbero: o il voler vedere in questa rivolta una volontà lontana di sostituzione del mondo sovietico con forme istituzionali del mondo occidentale attuale o di vedervi una incompiutezza, una pura velleitarietà. (Sorin/Ibsen 1966: 11, 16)

The theme of protest, rebellion, and failure was obviously crucial to all these texts, but it represented, as Bensi and Rapetti clearly outlined, a process through which Soviet poets took a long, hard look at themselves. The purpose of this type of literature was, therefore, to dig into the innermost relationship between a poet and their words, to study their ethical and civic implications along with the ways in which linguistic potential could be amplified. From the editors’ point of view, therefore, it was necessary to motivate the Italian reader to reflect on two elements of Russian literature in the twentieth century and beyond: the evolution of the relationship between poetry and words during the Russian twentieth century, and the connection between revolt and the search for identity, an aspect that developed in parallel way (but not in strict interdependence) in other European literatures as well. This tendency appeared clearly in the translated poems of Alexandr Kushner, Yuly Golovatenko-Mertsalov, and Nikolai Kotrelev, in the extremely “subversive” utterances of Sergei Chudakov, in the classicism of Joseph Brodsky, and even in the spirituality of Bella Akhmadulina and the denunciations of Boris Slutsky and Artem Mikhailov.

The anthology *Testi letterari e poesie* attracted little notice and, with the exception of a few articles and recommendations,¹⁶ the only actual review appeared in 1967 in the journal *Civitas*, signed by Mino Brunetti, a frequent contributor to the journal.

¹⁶ Manzari 1968; N.N. 1968.

Brunetti highlighted the anthology's socio-political character, strongly downplaying its literary value, in spite of what Bensi and Rapetti had emphasized:

Beyond its literary value, noteworthy only in a few cases, the interest of this collection is both political and social in nature. From a political point of view, the news of kidnappings and convictions may even surprise some, especially now that it's commonplace to say that the specter of Stalinism has been exorcised forever. From a social point of view, we can observe that, for all intents and purposes, there is a common denominator at the root of this type of literature – and of that other type that goes by the now abused and arbitrary name of “beat.” This common denominator is revolt, not only against this or that state system, but against *the* “state system” tout court; not only against this or that society, but against society itself as form of organization.

[...] Al di là del valore letterario che solo in certi casi è degno di nota l'interesse di questa raccolta è al contempo politico e sociale. Dal punto di vista politico le notizie di sequestri e di condanne, oggi che si dice comunemente che lo spettro dello stalinismo è stato esorcizzato per sempre, potrebbero persino sorprendere taluni. Dal punto di vista sociale si può osservare che, nella sostanza, un comune denominatore è alla base di questo tipo di letteratura e di quell'altra che va sotto il nome ormai abusato quanto arbitrario di beat: questo comune denominatore è la rivolta, non solo contro questo o quel sistema statale, ma contro *il* “sistema statale” tout court; non solo contro questa o quella società, ma contro la società in quanto organizzazione.

(Brunetti 1967: 129)

Therefore, Brunetti identified as the main element in the anthology the very thing disavowed by its editors, that “most serious mistake” that must be avoided, they claimed, in interpreting the phenomenon. Brunetti asserted with conviction the social premises of the texts, completely ignoring the deep and rooted layer described by Bensi and Rapetti. By all appearances, the Italian culture of the time was not ready to accept a phenomenon like samizdat

poetry: it did not have the tools to understand its causes – not so much its social causes, as its purely literary origins. What seems to be missing here is actual critical reflection on samizdat poetry that could situate it within Russian literary history while liberating it from ideological interpretations. This is obviously a long and complex journey, slowed down for the most part by the lack of critical tools for approaching a phenomenon that was still new in Europe and was quite different from the western underground press of the 1960s. In the early seventies, Italy had strong feelings on the issue of freedom of expression and the harsh opposition to the Soviet regime, and these are the lenses through which they looked at literary samizdat without fully understanding its historical roots and the value attributed to clandestine words – a problematic path that has typified Russian literature since its origins.

Jaca Book's mission to disseminate Soviet dissent was confirmed by subsequent publications. Its Piccola serie was devoted to the liberation movements in Vietnam, South America and Africa, but also some Soviet underground experiences. *Di fronte e attraverso*, *Libertà espressive*, and *Archivio per la Russia e per l'Europa Orientale*, launched in collaboration with the Christian Russia Study Center, were all series that included several works of political, religious and even literary dissent. Yury Galanskov's *Feniks 66* (1968) was marged with the Piccola serie, while in 1979 the collection *La primavera di Mosca. Le riviste dattiloscritte sovietiche degli anni '60: prosa, poesia, impegno civile agli inizi del dissenso* (*The Moscow Spring: The Soviet Typewritten Journals of the 1960s: Prose, Poetry, and Civic Commitment at the Beginning of Dissent*) was published in the series *Di fronte e attraverso*; it included most of the texts published in the 1966 anthology. The main dissident authors promoted by Jaca Book were Andrei Siniavsky, Alexandr Solzhenitsyn, Lydia Chukovskaya, Andrei Platonov, and Vasily Grossman. In the sixties, as discussed earlier, the major Italian publishing houses released books by Babel' (Feltrinelli), Evgenia Ginzburg (Mondadori), and Solzhenitsyn (Garzanti and Einaudi), but Jaca Book published works like *In difesa della piramide o contro Evtusenko* (*In Defense of the Pyramid (On Evtushenko's Poetry)*, 1967) and *Pensieri improvvisi* (*Mysli vrasploch; eng. Sudden Thoughts*, 1967) by Siniavsky, *Belaia kniga* (*The White Book*, 1967) by Aleksandr Ginzburg, and a collection of Solzhenitsyn's writings entitled *Tra autoritarismo e sfrut-*

tamento. *Interventi di A. I. Solzhenitsyn (Between Authoritarianism and Exploitation: Contributions by A.I. Solzhenitsyn, 1968).*

In 1980, thanks to Rapetti's efforts (this time in collaboration with Igor Sibaldi), Jaca Book published the censored versions, the only ones available at the time, of three novellas by Andrei Platonov – *Gorod Gradov (The City of Gradov)*, *Epifanskie shliuzy (The Epifan Locks)*, and *Sokrovennyi chelovek (The Secret Man)*¹⁷. In 1984, Jaca Book released Vasily Grossman's *Life and Fate* for the first time in Italian: Cristina Bongiorno's translation was based on the abridged text, the only one in circulation at the time. That same year, *Life and Fate* was celebrated as an "unusual bestseller" on the pages of the journal *Cultura e Libri*, where G. Cattini argued that, despite the fact that writers such as Solzhenitsyn and Grossman had not caused the resonance they deserved in the West, publishers felt nonetheless compelled to offer them to the public (Calusio 2019: 437). In the eighties, Vittorio Strada stressed the fact that Grossman's novel was proof of an interior freedom "utterly rare, even outside the USSR" ("così rara anche fuori dall'URSS"; *ibid.*: 1027). According to Strada,

Grossman wrote the first veritable anti-fascist novel about the anti-fascist war. In other words, he discovered that official anti-fascism was nothing more than the ideological disguise for another form of totalitarianism, similar to the fascist one, namely, Soviet communism, especially in its Stalinist form, but already, albeit in ways not yet entirely explicit, in that of Lenin.

Grossman aveva scritto il primo vero romanzo antifascista sulla guerra antifascista. Egli aveva cioè scoperto che l'antifascismo ufficiale non era altro che la maschera ideologica di un'altra forma di totalitarismo, analoga a quella fascista: il comunismo sovietico, soprattutto nella sua

17 The Italian reading public was first introduced to Platonov in 1968, when Einaudi published *Ricerca di una terra felice (In Search of a Happy Land)*, a collection that opened with the novella *Dzhan*, defined by Vittorio Strada (1968) as "the quintessence of Platonov's fantastic world."

variante staliniana, ma già, benché in forme non ancora del tutto esplicite, in quella di Lenin.

(Ibid.)

The Catholic press in particular was at pains to underscore the novel's value: "Novel-epic, novel-document, novel-exposé: however you want to define it, it certainly marks an era and gives back to literature its prophetic and civic role"¹⁸ (ibid.: 1028).

Back in the seventies, Jaca Book's interest in the Soviet world, even at a moment of financial crisis, paralleled that of other Italian publishers and focused on three major fundamental issues in order to define the publishing house's image in terms of Christian identity, an awareness of political history, and responsibility (Autobiografia 1974: 14–20). Throughout the seventies, by publishing underground Soviet literature, Jaca Book tried to make its own contribution to the debate around the sense of Christian community, in order to "retrace the history of the Christian fact, to understand its consistency today and to draw from its actual experience of unity, and therefore of human liberation"¹⁹ (Autobiografia 1974: 15). The trail blazed by Jaca Book is now open to new authors, including Marxists, the extra-parliamentary left, and Catholic communists.²⁰

The early seventies bore many fruits on the Soviet front. In 1971, Jaca Book published its greatest number of Russian-Soviet titles (eight in total), ranging from literature to philosophy, from religion to economic and social policy, and focusing on neo-Platonic and existentialist philosophy in particular, as well as on the economic vision of the so-called Left Opposition. There was also no shortage of studies and monographs against Leninism and Stalinism, written by authoritative figures on the Italian and European intellectual

18 "Romanzo-epopea, romanzo-documento, romanzo-denunzia: comunque lo si voglia definire, certamente segna un'epoca e restituisce alla letteratura il suo ruolo profetico e civile."

19 "ripercorrere la storia del fatto cristiano, di comprendere la sua consistenza oggi e di trarne l'effettiva esperienza di unità e perciò di liberazione dell'uomo."

20 Bucharin 1971; Berdjaev 1971; Centro studi di Russia Cristiana 1971; Preobrazenskij 1971a; Preobrazenskij 1971b; Sinjavskij 1971; Solov'ev 1971; Solzenicyn 1971.

landscape (especially from France) who had a profound knowledge of the Soviet Union.

In 1977, the year of the heated Venice Biennale, Jaca Book released a fair number of works on dissent, although no literary works. Indeed, its titles included monographs and translations of a philosophical nature devoted to Berdiaev and Semen Frank (Dell'Asta 1977; Frank 1977). The only fiction writer that Jaca Book published in 1977 (and later in 1982) was Lydia Chukovskaya, an eyewitness of the Great Terror, during which her husband, the talented writer and influential astrophysicist Matvei Bronshtein, was arrested. In 1977, Jaca Book published *La casa deserta* (*Opustelyi dom*; eng. *The Deserted House*), and in 1982, *Il processo. Memoria di un costume letterario* (*Protssess iskliucheniia*; eng. *The Process of Expulsion*), a tamizdat work published by YMCA Press in 1979. This work is comparable in terms of genre to Olga Berggolts's *Zapretnyi dnevnik* (*Forbidden Diary*), as they are both works of literature as testimony, but is also similar to Akhmatova's *Requiem*, an elegy about the years of the Yezhovshchina, written a little later, during the winter of 1939–1940, immediately after two years spent in line outside the Leningrad prisons.

The seventies were undoubtedly a time when Jaca Book systematized its work while also reaching out towards areas that reflected its close relationship with Fr. Giussani, who promoted books on the status and the role of the Church in the Soviet Union (Codevilla 1972; Chrysostomus 1974). As for literary works, the last title published by Jaca Book before the Soviet Union's collapse was *Tre minuti di silenzio* (*Tri minuty molchaniia*; eng. *Three Minutes of Silence*) by Georgy Vladimov (1986, translated by Serena Prina), an exponent of the so-called *molodaia proza* (youth prose). This tamizdat novel was originally published in France by Gallimard and then in 1982 in Frankfurt by Posev Verlag. In the Russian preface to the Frankfurt edition, Vladimov revealed that the novel had been published in *Novyi mir* in 1969, but been harshly attacked and ravaged by the censorship back home (Vladimov 1986: 5–6). In Italy, Vladimov was published for the first time in 1976: *Il fedele Ruslan. Storia di un cane del lager* (*Vernyi Ruslan*; eng. *Faithful Ruslan*) was translated by Rapetti for Mondadori. The novel chronicles the “adventures” of a guard dog in a concentration camp. Readers reacted positively to Rapetti's translation. It was reviewed that same year in *Panorama* by Ferdinando

Camon, who defined it as a novel “full of pathos,” (“ricco di pathos”) even though sometimes verging on the pathetic (Camon 1986: 30).

During those years, Jaca Book’s editorial line aimed at distancing the press not only from its usual competitors, but also from that of new publishers giving a voice to unofficial Soviet culture, while at the same time pushing the debate towards larger issues like totalitarianism, censorship, and freedom of the press and expression from a specific point of view (that of the Catholic community) that was an alternative to the new ideological waves. Undoubtedly, this path was fraught with obstacles put in place by the vast and articulated Catholic movement in its search for renewed avenues of activism after the Second Vatican Council, which was responsible for the rise of new forms of associationism (Tassani 1978: 94). The principle that emerged during the 1967 Urbino meeting, according to which Jaca Book should not be “Catholic by subject,” but should address contemporary issues, was the cornerstone that gave momentum to Jaca Book’s cultural activism. Its founders thought it necessary not to limit themselves to a dialogue among like-minded individuals, but rather to push the debate beyond the boundaries of their own identity, prioritizing the search for useful perspectives in order to fully understand the problems at hand. This discussion seemed to open paths of amicable collaboration with “politically more open-minded bookshops (especially – and this does not appear to be contradictory to us – the new neighborhood or small-town bookshops) such as the Feltrinelli bookstores, as well as dozens of bookstores that have bloomed in recent years and are connected to each other and to our editorial staff”²¹ (Autobiografia 1974: 105).

In the 1970s, Jaca Book understood it could carve out a sizable space for itself within a genre that had emerged renewed in the Italian publishing world, namely, Gulag literature and the literature of testimony, a space the publishing house would fortify from the 1980s on. The collapse of the Soviet Union, in fact, called for a general historical reflection on memory and an evaluation of the period that would affect the whole of Europe while it reshaped its

21 “politicamente più aperte (specie, e ciò non sembra una contraddizione, le nuove librerie di quartiere o dei piccoli paesi) come le librerie Feltrinelli, oltreché una decina di librerie sorte negli ultimi anni in collegamento fra di loro e con la nostra redazione.”

values. This was why, in the nineties, that Jaca Book increased the numbers of translations of authors like Solzhenitsyn it released, a trend that has continued to the present day, now that Jaca Book has diversified its publishing activity into new channels and new languages.

Jaca Book found Soviet dissident literature valuable, therefore, not only because they wanted to disseminate Russian-Soviet culture, but also because it answered their need to reaffirm a cultural identity that opposed all forms of authoritarianism and totalitarianism in the desire to open a dialogue with forms of Marxism as part of a historical process. A case in point was the editorial note that Jaca Book added to its edition of Siniavsky's *Sudden Thoughts*: the path of clandestine literature was a way of investigating and going beyond Marcuse's "one-dimensional man" to discover how human beings, as products of contemporary capitalism and Soviet society, could never become "fully actualized models" ("un modello totalmente attualizzato"; Nota di redazione 1967: 9).

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Ilja Kukuj

Between Samizdat and Tamizdat: The Case of the Almanac *Fioretti*

Abstract: The paper focuses on the history of *Fioretti* (1965), a samizdat almanac of the Malaya Sadovaya poets, one of the first unofficial literary communities in Leningrad in the 1960s. The planned publication of the almanac both in samizdat and tamizdat (particularly, in the journal *Grani*, affiliated with the NTS) was cancelled for fear of likely persecution by the Soviet authorities. The paper describes the period's historical and political context and reconstructs the list of contributing authors at the time of its (non)publication, based on archival findings. A comparative analysis of the almanac's contents with its new edition, published by Mikhail Yupp in Philadelphia in 2017, raises several questions about strategies for canonizing unofficial authors in Soviet times and today.

Keywords: *Fioretti*, Vladimir Erl', Malaya Sadovaya poets, Andrei Gaivoronsky, Mikhail Yupp

In memory of Vladimir Erl'

The tradition of republishing Soviet samizdat literary periodicals and anthologies in tamizdat dates back to the 1960s, when the journal *Grani* republished *Feniks*, a Moscow youth magazine, in its fifty-second issue (*Grani* 1962: 86–190).¹ In 1965, two similar publications from Moscow came out in *Grani*: the three volumes of the almanac *Sintaksis* (ed. Aleksandr Ginzburg; *Grani* 1965a: 97–131) were published in no. 58, while the journal *Sfinksy* (ed. Valery Tarsis; *Grani* 1965b: 6–77) was published in the following issue, no. 59.

1 The anthology *Feniks* 1966 (ed. Yury Galanskov) was also published in nos. 63–65 and 67–69 of *Grani*. For a detailed list of the samizdat publications featured in the first hundred issues of *Grani*, see *Grani* 1977.

Samizdat publications in Leningrad and other cities were also sometimes picked up by tamizdat: for example, a special issue of the academic journal *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach* republished the second issue of the Leningrad almanac *Istoriko-literaturnye chteniia* (*Historical and Literary Studies*; WSA 1984),² and volume 3a of *The Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry* featured a republication of the first issue of the almanac *Maya* (Frunze/Pskov/Leningrad, 1980: see Kuž'minskii/Kovalev 1986a: 793–920).³ The almanac *Neue Russische Literatur*, published in Salzburg between 1978 and 1983, was virtually a samizdat magazine compiled in Moscow by the poet Slava Lyon.

Like many other tamizdat literary publications, these journals and almanacs were read both in and outside the Soviet Union. Tamizdat had two functions: to present Soviet underground culture to the global public and unofficially distribute such publications within the Soviet Union. The republication of samizdat anthologies and journals also ensured that their contents would not be lost to posterity. Full-fledged samizdat periodicals, such as *Chasy* (*The Clock*), 37, *Obvodny Kanal* and others that were published in dozens or sometimes hundreds of copies, appeared in the 1970s and 1980s, but earlier anthologies and journals often existed only in several copies. This was particularly the case in the 1960s, but even later many underground publications were typewritten, producing just several carbon copies. For example, *Istoriko-literaturnye chteniia*, republished in *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach*, was originally published in just three copies (Severiukhin 2003: 402).

After the Soviet Union's collapse and the de facto abolition of censorship,⁴ tamizdat ceased to exist as a cultural phenomenon. Small editions went online mostly as private projects,⁵ just as before, but sometimes they were subjected to in-depth academic systematization and reflection. Such is the case of the large archive of samizdat periodicals collected by the Project

2 Excerpts from the first issue were also published in the back of the journal.

3 For more on *Maya*, see Orlov 2021.

4 See the Soviet Law on Press and Other Mass Media (June 12, 1990). Its passage was reported, for example, in Woodruff 1990.

5 For example, see the Knizhnica online archive of rare samizdat, launched by the New York photographer and poet Gleb Simonov. URL: www.knizhnica.com (5/11/2020).

for the Study of Dissidence and Samizdat, supervised by Ann Komaromi at the University of Toronto. A few academic and cultural institutions that are part of the Russian Art Archive Network also archive materials and advance samizdat studies.⁶

Among the most recent publications to highlight the importance of tamizdat in preserving and disseminating samizdat was the facsimile edition of the almanac *Fioretti* (Fioretti 2017) edited by Mikhail Yupp in Philadelphia. In 1965, this almanac was supposed to serve as a platform for the literary works of the Malaya Sadovaya poets. One of the first Leningrad unofficial literary communities, the group emerged in a café on Malaya Sadovaya Street in the city center. The plight of the almanac, both in its samizdat and “tamizdat” versions, is an iconic story⁷ of the period, many of whose witnesses and participants are no longer with us.⁸

6 URL: russianartarchive.net/ru (5/11/2020).

7 It is worth pointing out the self-reflective mirror motif in the anthologies edited by Konstantin Kuzminsky. The anthologies he produced in Leningrad deserve a separate study, but their concise chronology goes as follows. In 1972, Doubleday published Susanna Massie's *The Living Mirror: Five Young Poets of Leningrad* (Massie 1972), in which Kuzminsky was featured as an author (along with Joseph Brodsky, Gleb Gorbovsky, Alexander Kushner and Viktor Sosnora) and uncredited co-editor. In the summer of 1972, Kuzminsky published a collection of fourteen younger poets, which was reprinted four times over the next two years (Kuz'minskii 1972–1974), and shortly afterwards (sic!) an anthology of his “teachers or, say, elder fellow authors,” *Zhivoe zerkalo: pervyi etap leningradskoi poesii* (*The Living Mirror: The First Stage of Leningrad Poetry*), which featured, apart from the aforementioned poets, Gennady Alekseev, Leonid Aronzon, Anri Volokhonsky, Mikhail Eremin, Roal'd Mandelshtam, Anatoly Naiman, Evgeny Rein, Vladimir Ufliand, and Eduard Shneiderman (Kuz'minskii/Massie 1973?). The title page of this anthology, stored in the Kuzminsky archives at the Amherst Center for Russian Culture, indicates the year of publication as “197.” We have established the year based on Kuzminsky's own statement on the matter (Kuz'minskii/Kovalev 1980: 21). We have also noted that many dates in the first volume of his *Blue Lagoon Anthology of Modern Russian Poetry* were reconstructed by the editor from memory.

8 As of this writing, the following *Fioretti* contributors have died: Aleksandr Al'tshuler, Leonid Aronzon, Evgeny Venzel', Andrei Gaivoronsky, Aleksandr Mironov, Oleg Nivorozhkin, Valery Fedorov, Aleksandr Churilin, and Vladimir Erl'.

The republication of *Fioretti* outside Russia more than fifty years after its creation is symbolic in many respects. This edition is valuable, at the very least, as something that claims to be a facsimile reproduction of a legendary early samizdat document that many had heard of, but few had seen, because the only surviving copy was in the private collection of poet Andrei Gaivoronsky (the pen name of Andrei Kuz'minchuk, 1947–2016). The idea of reissuing *Fioretti* was first voiced in the 1970s by the poet and textual critic Vladimir Erl' who at that time ran a samizdat "publishing house" called *Palata mer i vesov* (Chamber of Weights and Measures). Erl' had also planned to publish the almanac after the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s. In September 1997, the copy that belonged to Gaivoronsky was given to the Malaya Sadovaya poet Mikhail Yupp, who since 1981 has lived in Philadelphia. In 2003, the encyclopedia *Samizdat Leningrada* announced Yupp's plan to republish *Fioretti* (Severiukhin 2003: 468). The republication, which took place after a nearly fifteen-year delay, in 2017, as well as a few findings in the archives of the recently deceased Erl' (May 14, 1947–September 25, 2020) have made it possible to establish the probable contents of the original *Fioretti*.

Fioretti is often mentioned in various academic and reference materials,⁹ so we shall focus on its history and contents as well as its significance for underground culture. The contents call for a detailed explanation, as the almanac's only copy was stored for over fifty years in Gaivoronsky's and then Yupp's private collection and had been seen by only a few people.

Fioretti was virtually the first samizdat publication by an unofficial literary and non-student community in Leningrad. Until the mid-1960s, other almanacs and anthologies published in samizdat either appeared within official institutions (universities, usually) or were private undertakings by their editors. The first group consists of such journals as *Goluboi buton* (*Blue Flower Bud*, 1955, Faculty of Philology, Leningrad State University), *Eres'* (*Heresy*, 1956, literature club at the Library Institute), *Svezhie golosa* and *Golosok* (*Fresh Voices* and *Thin Voice*, 1956–1957, Institute of Railway Engineers), *Tupoi ugol* (*Blunt Angle*, 1957, Polytechnical Institute), *Optima* (1960–1962, evening department, Faculty of Philology, Leningrad State University), the bulletin-board newspapers *Kultura* (1956, Technological Institute) and

9 Besides the sources quoted in this paper, see Savitskii 1998 and Morse 2021.

Litfront filfaka (1956, Faculty of Russian Language and Literature, Herzen Pedagogical Institute); the almanacs *Lai* (*Barking*, 1962, Faculty of Philology, Leningrad State University), *Stezia* (*Path*, 1965, Faculty of Mathematics and Mechanics, Leningrad State University), and *Almanakh* (seven volumes, 1965–1966, Faculty of Russian Language and Literature, Herzen Pedagogical Institute). The second group consists of such anthologies as *Belye noch*i (*White Nights*, nos. 1–3, 1956–1958, ed. Anatoly Domashev), *Prizma* (*Prism*, 1961–1962, ed. Boris Taigin and Konstantin Kuzminsky), *Parus* (*Sail*) and *Chertopolokh* (*Thistle*, 1965–1966, ed. Oleg Liagachev and Valery Petrachenkov), as well as *Antologiiia sovetskoi patologii* (*Anthology of Soviet Pathology*, 1962, ed. Konstantin Kuzminsky).¹⁰ In January 1965, the Gorozhane (City Slickers) literary group (Boris Vakhtin, Vladimir Gubin, Igor' Efimov, Vladimir Maramzin) submitted a collection of their works to Sovetskii pisatel' publishing house, but the book was rejected.

Fioretti was planned the same year (1965) as an alternative to the fruitless attempts at dialogue with the literary authorities. It showed the road that Leningrad unofficial culture would follow ten years later, after a failed attempt to publish the anthology *Lepta* (*Mite*) in 1975: establishing alternative unofficial literary institutions and journals.¹¹

Importantly, apart from personal relations and shared interests, the Malaya Sadovaya poets shared a common geographical milieu around the Eliseevsky grocery store, which in September 1963 boasted one of the city's first espresso machines.¹² After quite literally taking a gulp of freedom, the coffee shop visitors would continue their conversations in the nearby courtyards and stairwells, or in a small garden near the Winter Stadium, unoffi-

10 The list is based on the encyclopedia *Samizdat Leningrada* (Severiukhin 2003: 391–468). I am grateful to Gabriel Superfin for his valuable comments.

11 See more on the anthology *Lepta* in Kuz'minskii/Kovalev 1986b: 275–326; Kukui 2008.

12 Date as cited in Lur'e 2013. Coffee beans were not sold in Leningrad until the late 1950s; the first espresso machines to appear in the city were produced by the Hungarian brand Omnia. According to Viktor Krivulin, the first café to have them was located in the Aeroflot ticket office on Nevsky Prospect. See also Il'ia Cherniak's memoir about Malaya Sadovaya (Cherniak 2009), which is particularly valuable as its author was not a writer. For more memoirs on Leningrad coffee culture, see Nikol'skaia 2014.

cially dubbed Katzenhof,¹³ in “Orbita” (the garden around the monument to Pushkin on Arts Square), or outside the Rodina movie theater on Manezhnaia Square. The nearby Public Library, Russian State Museum, Leningrad Philharmonic (both its Large and Small Concert Halls), and the House of Cinema were essential landmarks in the city’s cultural landscape. In the Lavka pisatelei (Writers’ Shop), near the corner of the Fontanka River Embankment and Nevsky Prospect, and the second-hand bookshops on Liteiny Prospect and at the corner of Herzen Street and Nevsky Prospect, one could buy reasonably priced books of Silver Age and avant-garde Russian poetry. The idlers would go there to enjoy a cup of coffee on Leningrad’s “Broadway,” that is Nevsky Prospect, or even something stronger outside a grocery store. A few hundred meters away, on the other side of Nevsky Prospect, in the Lomonosovskaia Liniia and Perinnaia Liniia of the Gostiny Dvor department store, was the famous “Galera,” a black market for imported merchandise. The encounters of the young poets, many of whom were still high school students, with their older friends and the rest of the motley downtown crowd was the background that shaped the identity of Leningrad unofficial literature, its horizons, canons of books, range of opinions, and attitudes to fellow writers and the public, and, of course, the personal contacts that were fundamental for cultural intercourse (and samizdat in particular). As Vladimir Erl’ wrote about the period:

The total number of people who knew each other within the Malaya Sadovaya circle while it existed ranged between two and three hundred according to various tallies. The ability and practice of freely discussing questions of philosophy, religion, literature, aesthetics, and art was what made all the Malaya Sadovaya habitués (with few exceptions) kindred spirits and brought them together. The community of Malaya Sadovaya

13 The name was proposed by Vladimir Erl’, a cat lover, as an alternative to its “original” nickname, “Sobachii sadik” (“Dog Garden”), as it was used by neighborhood residents to walk their dogs. Katzenhof was also renowned for its statue of a young mother with children, commonly referred to as the “Oedipus Complex.” Katzenhof could be seen as an obscure allusion to “Kat’kin Sadik” (“Kate’s Garden”), the vernacular name for the garden around the monument to Catherine the Great on the other side of Nevsky Prospect.

poets lasted for many years [...]. Of course, not all the people who frequented Malaya Sadovaya were creative: some were grateful listeners and spectators or just pleasant interlocutors. But all of them should be identified as Malaya Sadovaya poets, for “all of them are beautiful... all of them are poets.”¹⁴

В целом общее количество так или иначе знакомых между собой по Малой Садовой за все время ее существования достигало (по разным подсчетам) от двухсот до трехсот человек. Возможность и практика свободного обсуждения философских, религиозных, литературных, эстетических и художественных вопросов составляло то общее, что сближало и роднило всех (за немногими исключениями) завсегдатаев Малой Садовой. Это единство поэтов Малой Садовой сохранилось на долгие годы [...]. Разумеется, не все посетители Малой Садовой занимались творчеством; многие были только благодарными слушателями или зрителями, иногда просто приятными собеседниками. Однако фактически все они тоже должны быть названы поэтами Малой Садовой, – ведь “все они красавцы... все они поэты.”¹⁵ (Erl’ 2011: 92–93)

Malaya Sadovaya served as a platform that let many of its writers transcend their small groups of friends. After Malaya Sadovaya ceased to function as a community, many of its poets were instrumental in shaping Leningrad’s “second culture,” while remaining faithful to the spirit of the place where they had got their start. This could be clearly seen in the readings given by the Malaya Sadovaya poets as a single literary group in the mid-1960s (at the Herzen Pedagogical Institute, the Kafe poetov (Café of Poets) on Poltavskaiia Street, the Mukhina School of Art and Design, and various literary institutions), and later in the 1990s and 2000s (at the Dostoevsky Memorial Apartment Museum, the Akhmatova Museum at Fountain House, the Pushkin

14 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from the Russian are mine – I. K.

15 Quotation from the song “Batal’noe polotno” (“Battlescape,” 1973) by Bulat Okudzhava.

Memorial Apartment, etc.),¹⁶ as well as in the memoirs of the poets themselves, who identified Malaya Sadovaya as the source of Leningrad's "kofeinaia" ("coffeehouse"; Bukovskaia 2009: 21) or "ulichnaia" ("street"; Erl' 2009: 29) culture. "Everything started for me at Malaya Sadovaya" ("Для меня все начиналось с Малой Садовой"), poet Aleksandr Mironov told Yulia Valieva (Mironov 2009: 32). Nikolai Nikolaev called Malaya Sadovaya a place of inner freedom: "It wasn't just a meeting place, but a space with something metaphysical in the air. We didn't come there to deal with personal matters, but for something completely different. [...] It was serious, it was the real thing" (Nikolaev 2009: 40, 43).¹⁷

Therefore, the work on *Fioretti* in 1965 was particularly important to the Malaya Sadovaya poets: the collective publication pushed them beyond the bounds of individual typewritten collections and into a shared space where every voice was part of a polyphony. "Through participation in *Fioretti*, young and gifted poets could not only feel their significance for the global art process, but also take the first step up Mount Olympus" (Churilin 2012: 290).¹⁸ The individual experiments and quests of the emergent "second culture" generation now had a common vector.

The idea of producing the almanac occurred to the writer and engineer Aleksandr Churilin (1941–2017); the title, to the poet and writer Oleg Nivorozhkin (1943–2006), who had been passionately reading *The Little Flowers of Saint Francis of Assisi*.¹⁹ The discussions of possible contributors and the concept of the almanac took place in spring 1965. According to the memoirs

16 See Erl' 2011: 92.

17 "Оно было не просто 'площадкой' для встречи, а особым пространством, над которым витало нечто метафизическое. Мы там собирались не для того, чтобы решать свои личные дела, а для иного. [...] Все было всерьез, взаправду."

18 "Участие в 'Fioretti' позволило молодым талантам не только сразу почувствовать свою значимость в мировом художественном процессе, но и встать как бы на первую ступеньку Олимпа."

19 A. P. Pechkovsky's Russian translation was published by the Symbolist publishing house Musaget in 1913; it was reprinted in the Soviet Union only in 1990. In tamizdat, it was reprinted in 1974 by the Brussels-based publisher Zhizn' s Bogom (Life with God). According to Nikolai Nikolaev, Malaya Sadovaya's religious and philosophical tendencies were first manifested in *Fioretti*. Aleksandr Prokof'ev and Dmitry Makrinov would eventually become priests (Nikolaev 2009: 41).

of witnesses, the very idea of producing a group publication (a second issue was planned as well) served as a symbol of personal and creative freedom. As Il'ia Cherniak later wrote:

The very idea that the Malaya Sadovaya group had of publishing an almanac was dangerous. But talking about it openly was exciting and attractive precisely in terms of its lack of inhibition. Sometimes they almost shouted about the almanac from the rooftops. I don't remember exactly who it was, Yupp or Zviagin, who suggested putting a picture of the monument to Catherine the Great on the cover, number each copy, and send one to the restricted-access collection at the Public Library.

Сама идея малосадовцев издавать альманах была опасной. Однако разговоры об этом плане, причем довольно открытые, будоражили и привлекали именно своей раскованностью. Иногда об альманахе практически кричали на всех углах. Не помню точно кто, Юпп или Звягин, предлагал изобразить на обложке вид на памятник Екатерине, сделать номерные экземпляры и один из них послать прямо в спецхран Публичной библиотеки.

(Cherniak 2009: 55)

In April 1965, Mironov and Erl' went to Moscow for a few weeks (they were seventeen at the time, although Erl' would turn eighteen in May 1965), meeting Valery Tarsis and members of the group SMOG.²⁰ The poems they left behind in Moscow were incorporated into the anthology *Sfinksy* (July 1965) and published abroad in *Grani* in late 1965.²¹ A visit to Leningrad by SMOG members Vladimir Aleinikov and Vladimir Batshev is clear evidence that the plan to publish an almanac was no secret:

20 For more on their visit, during which they met Leonid Gubanov and Vladimir Batshev, and submitted their poems, see Batshev 2017: 110–111. Batshev writes that his trip to Leningrad took place on June 25–28. Mironov introduced Batshev to Gaivoronsky, Krivulin, Aleksandr Prokof'ev, and Leonid Aronzon (ibid.: 167–168).

21 On the effect of tamizdat publications on the samizdat landscape, see Savitskii 2002: 31–36.

Radically-minded [...] Vladimir Batshev [...] brought the rubber stereotypes from *Grani* and proposed that we combine our efforts. [...] We decided to send a few copies of the almanac to Moscow and find a publisher or, should we fail, have part of it published in *Grani*.

Весьма радикально настроенный [...] Владимир Батшев [...] привез резиновые матрицы от журнала “Грани” и предложил объединить усилия для совместных действий. [...] Решено было отправить несколько экземпляров альманаха в Москву, чтобы пристроить его в каком-нибудь издательстве, а если не получится, то частично опубликовать в “Гранях”.

(Gaivoronskii 2004: 35)²²

According to Batshev himself, the almanac was not turned over to him during his visit to Leningrad; most likely, the Leningraders had not yet started mak-

22 According to Batshev (email, March 10, 2021), he brought the stereotypes of the special 1965 issue of *Grani* (ten pages of published and planned materials) to Leningrad. In his critical review of *Fioretti*, Rostislav Polchaninov, a historian, bibliophile, and member of the National Alliance of Russian Solidarists (NTS) since 1936 (!), describes the technology for producing such stereotypes: “It [*Grani*] was sent to USSR in the form of pocketbook-size special editions printed on thin paper or rubber stereotypes, or simply as prints and microfilms of the articles. In Frankfurt, NTS members would typeset the special editions page by page. The typeset (consisting of tin letters) was then put in a special plaster to make a cast, after which the rubber would be poured, producing a stereotype. To make a print, all one needed was ink and a pad, something one could easily find in the Soviet Union. But people were sent to forced-labor camps, that is, concentration camps, for engaging in this amateur activity” (“В СССР он [журнал “Грани” – И.К.] засылался в виде спецвыпусков карманного формата на тонкой бумаге, резиновых матриц или попросту печатей и микрофильмов с материалами из журнала. Во Франкфурте члены НТС набирали страницу за страницей тексты спецвыпусков. Набор (оловянные буквы) опускались в особый гипс. Так делалась форма, в которую наливали резину. В результате получалась резиновая печать. Для того чтобы сделать отпечаток, надо было иметь подушечку и краску для печати. Все это можно было в СССР достать без особого труда. За такую самодеятельность людей отправляли в ИТЛ – исправительно-трудовые лагеря, т. е. в концлагеря.” – Polchaninov 2018: 40).

ing copies of it. Soon, however, circumstances took a turn for the worse for SMOG. On June 20, 1965, before Batshev's visit, Leonid Likhodeev published a satirical piece on SMOG's manifesto in *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, entitled "Reflected Hyperbole" ("Otrazhennaia giperbola").²³ On June 27, Komsomol Central Committee First Secretary Sergei Pavlov wrote in *Pravda*:

Most of all, our enemies want to sow in the minds of Soviet youth the disgusting seeds of unbelief, hopelessness, and philistinism. [...] About a dozen and a half loafers gathered and declared themselves "the youngest society of geniuses," and the western press categorizes this as the new inspiration of "a whole generation."

Больше всего желают враги наши посеять в умах советской молодежи отвратительные семена неверия, безысходности, обывательщины. [...] Собрались где-то полтора десятка лоботрясов и объявили себя "самым молодым обществом гениев", а западная пресса заносит это в разряд нового порыва "целого поколения".
(Pavlov 1965)

On July 2, "the western press," or the weekly *Posev* specifically, responded with an editorial entitled "The Authorities Speak Out about Youth Organization" (Posev 1965). In late July, the British teacher Gerald Brooke, who was arrested in April 1965 for "subversive anti-Soviet activity on the territory of the Soviet Union," particularly for distributing the anti-Soviet literature published by the NTS (such as *Grani*), was put on trial in Moscow. *Pravda*'s July 24 editorial states:

The witness Konstantinov testified that the dressing case and album that Brooke gave to him contained hidden addresses, instructions, printing plates, and Soviet money. [...] Brooke, on the instructions of the NTS, illegally brought from England and tried to distribute hostile literature

23 SMOG's manifesto was supposed to be presented to the Union of Soviet Writers, but was confiscated from Batshev outside the Central House of Writers during a protest there on April 14, 1965.

containing slanderous fabrications that defamed the Soviet state and social system. [...] The court sentenced the accused to five years of imprisonment, of which the first year would be served in prison, and the next four years in a high-security correctional labor colony.

Свидетель Константинов показал, что в переданных ему Бруком несессере и альбоме были скрыты адреса, инструкции, клише, советские деньги. [...] Брук по заданию НТС нелегально привез из Англии и пытался распространять литературу враждебного характера, содержащую клеветнические измышления, порочащие советский государственный и общественный строй. [...] Суд приговорил обвиняемого к пяти годам лишения свободы с отбыванием первого года в тюрьме, а последующих четырех лет в исправительно-трудовой колонии строгого режима.

(Pravda 1965)

By this point, at the latest, the editors of *Fioretti* realized that “things were getting serious” and “flowers were being nipped in the bud” (“дело принимало серьезный оборот”; “цветочки” превращались в ‘ягодки’ прямо на глазах”; Gaivoronskii 2000: 35). Batshev’s work as an envoy of *Grani* (that is, of the NTS) had become political and was fraught with dangerous consequences. There was a rumor that an informer had infiltrated the Malaya Sadovaya group.²⁴ As there now was a threat that *Fioretti* might end up in

24 Nikolai Nikolaev recalls: “If that’s when it happened, then most likely an innocent person was maligned” (“Если это было именно тогда, то я подозреваю, что оклеветали никак не причастного, скорее всего, человека”; email, November 6, 2020). However, Aleksandr Churilin wrote: “At some point, someone suspected someone else of being a snitch. And indeed, one of my friends once got drunk and confided in me that he ‘felt bitter and bad’ about putting together dossiers on people and taking them to Gipronikel (where the KGB had an office) to Lerner himself (!), the one who testified for the prosecution at [Joseph] Brodsky’s trial” (“Был и еще один момент, когда кто-то кого-то подозревал в стукачестве. И действительно, один такой друг, напившись, признался мне, что ему порой ‘очень горько и обидно’ собирать на некоторых досье и бегать в ‘Типроникель’ (где был пункт КГБ) к самому Лернеру (!) – тому самому, который был обвинителем на суде И. Бродского.” – Churilin 2012: 289).

the hands of the secret services, reproduction of the almanac was not begun in earnest. The primitive copying device (whose possession was a criminal offence) and the stereotypes and prints of *Grani* were destroyed.

Gaivoronsky gives an elliptical description of how the printed copies of *Fioretti* disappeared: “We had a Pavlik Morozov [a traitor] among us who turned us in during the copying. [...] It was a hard blow as almost all of the materials for the almanac were lost” (Gaivoronskii 2000: 35–36).²⁵ Yupp provides the following description of the almanac’s (non)publication:

The poets Oleg Nivorozhkin, Mikhail Yupp, Vladimir Erl’, and Andrei Gaivoronsky were the main initiators. Five carbon copies were type-written, because someone said that it was not enough to press criminal charges. The ever-vigilant eye of the Leningrad KGB soon spotlighted the four possessors of the almanac. It was clear that we had a newly minted Pavlik Morozov among ourselves. Everyone was called in for questioning. That’s how our project was lost in the secret archives of the Big House on Liteiny Prospekt. But one copy survived, for “manuscripts don’t burn.” It was rescued and preserved by the poet Andrei Gaivoronsky.

Главными инициаторами этой затеи стали поэты: Олег Ниворожкин, Михаил Юпп, Владимир Эрль и Андрей Гайворонский. Отпечатаны под копирку пять экземпляров, благо кто-то сказал, что сие количество не будет считаться криминальным. Однако очень скоро дремлющее око ленинградского КГБ высветило четырех обладателей альманаха.²⁶ Очевидно, что и возле нашей группы ошивался некий новоявленный Павлик Морозов. Всех тогда перетаскали кой-куда. Ну а детище наше кануло в потайные архивы т. н. Большого Дома, что

25 “Нашелся и у нас свой ‘Павлик Морозов’ – при тиражировании альманаха он выдал нас, что называется, со всеми потрохами. [...] Удар был сильный, пропали почти все материалы альманаха.”

26 In Yupp’s memoirs, there is a discrepancy between the number of “initiators” (of whom there are four: editor Aleksandr Churilin is not listed among them) and the number of copies (five). This is probably an allusion to the surviving copy, but it could not have been a carbon copy as it was compiled from various typescripts. See Fioretti 2017.

на Литейном проспекте. Но один рабочий экземпляр все-таки сохранился, ибо рукописи не горят. Его сберег и сохранил поэт Андрей Гайворонский.

(Fioretti 2017: 5)

This was the copy, “in quite shabby condition” (“в весьма обглоданном виде”; Gaivoronskii 2004: 36), that Gaivoronsky and Yupp reconstructed and published in Philadelphia in 2017.

In April 1965, another event may have attracted the attention of the security services to the Malaya Sadovaya community. One of their readings was set to take place in the literature club (*litob’edinenie* or *lito*) at the Lensovet Palace of Culture:

A poetry evening was to be held at the Litobedinenie, summing up our winter vigils. Davydov²⁷ had suddenly left for Moscow, and the members of the Lito, taking advantage of his absence, decided to hold the reading at their own risk. By a strange coincidence, the evening took place on April 20, and that was Hitler’s birthday, which we did not know. But that was enough to punish us for our high-handedness.

В литобъединении должен был состояться поэтический вечер, подводящий итог зимним нашим бдениям. Давыдов неожиданно уехал в Москву, и члены Лито, воспользовавшись его отсутствием, решили провести выступление на свой страх и риск. По странному стечению обстоятельств вечер состоялся 20 апреля, а это был день рождения Гитлера, о чем мы не догадывались. Но этого оказалось достаточно, чтобы наказать нас за самоуправство.

(Gaivoronskii 2004: 34)

The community of *Fioretti* contributors began to disintegrate soon after the turmoil surrounding their almanac. In the autumn of 1966, Erl’ and Makrinov founded the Khelenukty movement, penning its manifesto along with

27 Sergei Davydovich Davydov (1928–2001) was a poet, writer, dramatist, and head of the literature club at the Lensovet Palace of Culture.

another *Fioretti* contributor, Aleksandr Mironov (while Nikolai Nikolaev was considered as an “opponent”). Tamara Bukovskaya, who contributed to *Fioretti* under the pen name “Alla Din,” announced the creation of the School of Concrete Poetry in 1967 along with Viktor Krivulin and Vladimir Krivosheev. *Fioretti* editor Aleksandr Churilin “from the spring of 1966 until the autumn of 1969 was little involved in the life of Malaya Sadovaya because he had contracted tuberculosis and underwent long-term treatment in hospitals and sanatoriums” (“с весны 1966 года и вплоть до осени 1969 года [...] выпал из участия в малосадовской деятельности, так как заболел туберкулезом и долго лечился в больницах и санаториях”; Churilin 2012: 290). Evgeny Venzel’ was conscripted into the army in 1966. Other writers followed their own paths. The next Malaya Sadovaya generation saw its veterans as “gods and goddesses of samizdat” (“боги и богини самиздата”) who knew the road into “another world perpendicular to reality” (“другой мир, перпендикулярный сущему”; Konstriktor 2011: 228). This world ceased to exist in the early 1970s when the espresso machine was removed from the Eliseevsky grocery store on Malaya Sadovaya, and the so-called Saigon Café became the new center of Leningrad’s coffeehouse culture.²⁸

In the late 1960s, one of the Malaya Sadovaya typists reproduced the only surviving copy of *Fioretti* (hereinafter, Gaivoronsky’s copy), but it was later lost.²⁹ However, both Gaivoronsky’s copy and the replica were inventoried

28 Yulia Valieva notes an important difference between Saigon and Malaya Sadovaya: “Unlike Malaya Sadovaya, the Saigon poets never established a literature group under the auspices of Saigon. For the whole period of the café’s existence (1964–1989), they did not release a single joint book that would allow us to refer to Saigon as a literary group” (“В отличие от малосадовцев, поэты-сайгонавты никогда не объединялись формально под знаком ‘Сайгона’ в какую-либо литературную группу. За время существования этого кафе (1964–1989 гг.) не было издано ни одного совместного сборника, который бы позволил говорить о ‘Сайгоне’ как о творческом содружестве”; Valieva 2013: 118).

29 See *Fioretti* 2017: 145. See Erl’s comment in the inventory of the copy: “E. M’s copy is an incomplete typescript of the editor’s copy; the selection of names and texts is not clearly warranted. The copyist may have not had the full text of the almanac at their disposal.” (“Экземпляр Е. М-ой представляет собой неполную перепечатку редакторского; выбор имен и текстов производился по мало обоснованным причинам. Возможно, в распоряжении копииста сб. находился не в полном со-

in the 1970s by Vladimir Erl', who was preparing a samizdat republication of the almanac. The inventory (hereinafter, Erl's inventory) and the plan of Erl's samizdat edition are found in his archive (see Appendix), which makes it possible to draw conclusions about the contents of the *Fioretti* almanac at the time it was completed, as well as about the nature of its reconstruction undertaken by Yupp with Gaivoronsky's consent.

With his signature literalism, Erl' reproduced in the appendix to his inventory every single author's and editor's comment in Gaivoronsky's copy, and we can therefore be certain that it was the copy that Yupp used for his phototype edition as all the handwritten marginalia are present in the facsimile. The selection of Gaivoronsky's poems was missing from Gaivoronsky's copy when Erl' inventoried it, and he only recorded its page numbers (25–29). However, this contribution was available to the typist when she made her typewritten copy; therefore, the contents of Gaivoronsky's contribution were made available by Erl' in the respective inventory and published in his plan for *Palata mer i vesov*. Except for two poems, that contribution was different from Yupp's 2017 edition and consisted of ten poems (see the Appendix). In Yupp's edition, the contribution consists of seventeen poems on six pages (instead of five). It is worth noting that Gaivoronsky later included two of the poems from this selection³⁰ in the cycle "Summer Poems" ("Letnie stikhi"), which was dedicated to Leonid Aronzon (see Gaivoronskii 2004: 53–60). The cycle's title is a reference to the summer of 1965 when the editing of *Fioretti* was finished and Gaivoronsky, as he later recalled, "was a frequent guest at Lionia Aronzon's home" ("часто стал бывать у Лени Аронзона"; Gaivoronskii 2004: 36). The dedication "Pamiati Leonida Aronzona" ("In memory of Leonid Aronzon") in Yupp's edition (Fioretti 2017: 61) could not have been made before 1970, the year Aronzon died in the mountains near

стае.") In the digital version of the inventory made in the 2000s (found in Nikolai Nikolaev's collection), Erl' reveals the name of the typist: Elena Makarova. In her copy, the contributions by Al'tshuler, Elena Diavari-bek, Makrinov, Nikolaev, Churilin, Zviagin, and Yupp are missing. For more on Yupp's contribution, see below.

30 "Here the city turns into the countryside..." ("Zdes' gorod perekhodit v zagorod...") and "Autumn sonnets – sad sonnets..." ("Sonety oseni – pechal'nye sonety...").

Tashkent.³¹ Therefore, Gaivoronsky's contribution to the 2017 edition was compiled afterwards.

Erl' mentioned other discrepancies in his letter to Yupp, dated June 3, 2000, which Yupp published in his edition (145–146). It concerns a typo in the title of Makrinov's poem "Collages" ("Kollazhi," instead of "Kollazh")³² and Bukovskaya's poem "Peterburg," missing from the selection of her work, which she made a marginal note about in Gaivoronsky's copy. In addition, Erl' suggested including in the republication a poem by Roman Belousov ("Sonet 23") and three poems by Evgeny Venzel' because they had appeared in Makarova's replica. These poems were reproduced as phototypes in the appendix of Yupp's edition.

Apart from those mentioned above, there are other discrepancies between Erl's inventory and Yupp's edition. Makrinov's poem "I remember walking..." ("Pomniu shel ia...") is missing. According to Erl', it was the first one in the selection of Makrinov's work and was the only one on the page. This accounts for the preservation of the pagination, which would have been affected by an extra page in Gaivoronsky's contribution. The poem "Midnight drew nearer..." ("Blizilos' vremia k polnochi...") was included in the selection of works by Roman Belousov, who was identified as "Roman Razin" in *Fioretti*. However, Belousov has stated that he did not write the poem, so it is not clear why it was included in the selection of his work, not to mention the fact that its inclusion made it necessary to correct the page numbers by hand starting from page 56 (previously 55), with the poem "About Grass" ("Pro travku"). These corrections can be seen in the facsimile through page 73 (previously 72), which is the last page of Gaivoronsky's copy. However, in Yupp's edition, it is followed by Yupp's contribution of twenty poems on twenty-nine pages, which is more than thirty percent of the original almanac.

There is no point in denying that Mikhail Yupp (née Smotkin, although from 1971 to 1988 he used his wife's last name, Taranov) was a prominent

31 Leonid Aronzon, twenty-six in the spring of 1965, did not visit Malaya Sadovaya frequently because he was older than its members, who regarded him as a friendly "older fellow" and mentor. Aronzon's close friend Aleksandr Al'tshuler was a frequent visitor to Malaya Sadovaya after the almanac's (non)publication.

32 A typescript page with Makrinov's poem and the title spelled correctly was turned up in Yupp's archive, so the page was replaced in the publication (Fioretti 2017: 144).

figure in Malaya Sadovaya's "perpendicular world," and his contribution to the almanac's 2017 edition comes as no surprise (although one might have expected it to be less abundant). But it should be noted that, until its publication in 2017, the almanac had never been seen either by its authors, or by the younger generation of Malaya Sadovaya poets. Konstantin Kuzminsky, who occasionally visited Malaya Sadovaya from 1967, wrote the following about *Fioretti*:

Probably in 1966, the almanac with that obscene title spontaneously appeared on Malaya Sadovaya. I have never laid my eyes on it, but I know that it had poetry and prose. I had no interest in prose then, but Vladimir Erl' made a typewritten copy of all the poetry for me later in 1974. There were mature and premature poets, there was the poetess Alla Din [...] aka Tamara Kozlova-Mishina-Bukovskaya, a famous religious poetess. I can't say much about many of the contributors because they were only active for a short period and never turned up anywhere later. [...] Besides, there were poems by some Anonymous, a couple of more or less decent poems by prose writer Zhenia Zviagin [...], probably poems by Erl' himself, and poems by Yup[p]. Those I didn't even bother to have copied. Those are all my impressions of an almanac I have never seen.

В 66-м году, надо полагать, на Малой Садовой стихийно возник альманах под этим непристойным названием. Альманах я не видел в глаза, но знаю, что в нем, помимо поэзии, была представлена и проза. Проза мне была ни к чему, было не до того, но поэзию мне всю перепечатал уже в 74-м году Владимир Эрль. Среди поэтов были и зрелые и недо, была поэтесса Алла Дин [...], она же Тамара Козлова-Мишина-Буковская, известная религиозная поэтесса. О многих из участников альманаха я попросту сказать ничего не могу: возникнув на краткий период, они более нигде и никогда не нарисовывались. [...] Еще там фигурировали стихи некоего "Анонима", парочка более-менее удобоваримых текстов (стихотворных) прозаика Жени Звягина [...], полагаю, стихи самого Эрля, и стихи Юп<п>а.

Эти я даже перепечатывать не просил. Вот и все впечатления от альманаха, который я никогда не видел.

(Kuz'minskii/Kovalev 1983: 194–195)

Fioretti editor Churilin probably also considered Yupp a contributor: the back-cover annotation to his book *The Emperor's Socks, Baden-Baden, and...* (*Noski imperatora, Baden-Baden, i...*; Churilin 2012) states that the almanac features the poetry and prose of sixteen Malaya Sadovaya authors. Without Yupp, the number would have been fifteen.

The stance taken by Gaivoronsky, who was a close friend of Yupp and Erl', deserves separate analysis. In his article "The Poets of Malaya Sadovaya" ("Poety Maloi Sadovoi") which was first published in 2000, Gaivoronsky wrote:

Apart from the prose works of Churilin and Nivorozhkin, the almanac featured the poems of Roman Belousov (Roman Razin), Tamara Bukovskaya (Alla Din), Evgeny Venzel', Andrei Gaivoronsky, Evgeny Zviagin, Dmitry Makrinov, Aleksandr Mironov, Nikolai Nikolaev, Vladimir Erl', and Elena Diavari-bek. **Leonid Aronzon, Aleksandr Al'tshuler, and Mikhail Yupp** were represented by large selections of poems. The almanac concluded with a selection of letters by Moscow artist Valery Fedorov.

В альманахе были представлены, кроме прозы Чурилина и Ниворожкина, стихи Романа Белоусова (Роман Разин), Тамары Буковской (Алла Дин), Евгения Вензеля, Андрея Гайворонского, Евгения Звягина, Дмитрия Макринова, Александра Миронова, Николая Николаева, Владимира Эрля и Елены Диавари-бек. **Леонид Аронзон, Александр Альтишлер и Михаил Юпп** были представлены большими подборками стихотворений. Завершался альманах публикацией писем московского художника Валерия Федорова.

(Gaivoronskii 2000: 86; hereinafter, the emphasis is mine)

This description, with minor changes, would be incorporated into Yupp's edition (Fioretti 2017: 21). When working on an extended version of "The

Poets of Malaya Sadovaya” for the book *The Sweet Music of Eternal Poems* (*Sladkaia muzyka vechnykh stikhov*, 2004), Gaivoronsky asked Erl’ for assistance. Consequently, the list of *Fioretti* contributors was corrected:

Apart from the prose works of Churilin and Nivorozhkin, the almanac featured poems by Roman Belousov (Roman Razin), Tamara Bukovskaya (Alla Din), Evgeny Venzel’, Andrei Gaivoronsky, Evgeny Zviagin, Dmitry Makrinov, Aleksandr Mironov, Nikolai Nikolaev, Vladimir Erl’, and Elena Diavari-bek. **Leonid Aronzon and Aleksandr Al’tshuler** were represented by large selections of poems. The almanac concluded with a selection of letters by Moscow artist Valery Fedorov.

В альманахе, кроме прозы Чурилина и Ниворожкина, были стихи Романа Белоусова (Роман Разин), Тамары Буковской (Алла Дин), Евгения Вензеля, Андрея Гайворонского, Евгения Звягина, Дмитрия Макринова, Александра Миронова, Николая Николаева, Владимира Эрля и Елены Диавари-бек. **Леонид Аронзон и Александр Альтшулер** были представлены большими подборками стихотворений. Завершался альманах публикацией писем московского художника Валерия Федорова.

(Gaivoronskii 2004: 34)

Gaivoronsky accepted Erl’s correction, that is, he deleted Yupp’s name from the list of contributors based on Gaivoronsky’s copy. Erl’ refers to the same list of contributors (sans Yupp) in his article on *Fioretti* in the encyclopedia *Samizdat Leningrada* (Severiukhin 2003: 467–468). The article on Mikhail Yupp in the same encyclopedia claims that he “is working on the publication of the almanac *Mavericks from Malaya Sadovaya – Fioretti – A Literary Almanac of the Void*” (“готовит к выпуску сборник ‘Чудаки с Малой Садовой – ‘Fioretti’ – Литературный альманах вакуума””; Severiukhin 2003: 385). It does not say that Yupp was meant to be a contributor to the almanac or its editor.

Given Erl’s inventory, whose correctness is confirmed by the facsimile in Yupp’s edition, and Gaivoronsky’s acknowledgement that the almanac ended with Fedorov’s letters, we can make conclusions about the contents of *Fioretti*

in the editor's copy at the moment when its publication was halted. The editors of the 2017 edition, Yupp and (posthumously) Gaivoronsky, informed readers on the title page that the almanac "is published as revised by the editors" ("печатается в редакции составителей") and is copyrighted by Yupp (Fioretti 2017: 2). In addition, it contains this clarification by Yupp:

I received permission for co-authorship from A. Gaivoronsky for the final revised version and publication of this book, as well as his expression of gratitude. [...] The list of contributors was made by A. Gaivoronsky and V. Erl' at the end of the twentieth century. ***The final list was extended and corrected by M. Yupp.***

Мной было получено разрешение о соавторстве от А. Гайворонского при окончательной редакции и издании данной книги и его благодарность. [...] Перечень имен участников в конце XX века составили А. Гайворонский и В. Эрль. ***Окончательный вариант дополнен и уточнен М. Юппом.***

(Fioretti 2017: 144)

The very fact that "the almanac 'Fioretti,' a flower of a past time, has been given a new life" in the post-tamizdat era ("цветок ушедшего времени альманах 'Fioretti' обрел новую жизнь"; Fioretti 2017: 143) is much appreciated. We are grateful to the editors for preserving it and publishing a facsimile. In the earlier samizdat republication of the almanac that Erl' planned in the 1970s, he wanted to include texts by other Malaya Sadovaya poets in the appendix (the list of poets and poems is unknown). The selection of Yupp's poems in the 2017 edition of Fioretti is a similar appendix, and our only regret is that it was not identified as such in the book.

It is not just its list of contributors that makes the history of *Fioretti* unique, but also such factors as space and time. For the half-century of its (non-)existence, the almanac made a journey similar to that of samizdat manuscripts and typescripts during the 1960s–1980s: from Russia abroad, to the United States, and then, many years later, back to Russia as a new publication. However, the transformation of samizdat into tamizdat, typical of the Soviet era, now turned into a journey through time.

The way Mikhail Yupp describes this journey is similar to the tamizdat model:

The authors of *Fioretti* were [...] diverse. But they were united by their longing for official recognition in any way possible. Our works traveled from the Leningrad underground to the West, where they were published in foreign Russian periodicals, thus returning home to the Russian Language.

Авторы альманаха “Fioretti” были [...] разными. Но их объединяло стремление к официальному признанию, притом любым путем. Таким образом из питерского подполья тех лет наши сочинения попадали на Запад, где их публиковали в русской зарубежной периодике и вновь возвращали в отечество Русского Языка.
(Fioretti 2017: 142)

Yupp’s claim about “longing for official recognition in any way possible” calls for critical reflection as its wording refers to the time when literature was divided into official (publishable) literature and unofficial literature, which was extant only in scarce copies available to limited groups. Every author wants to be recognized, and the availability of one’s texts to reader is the watershed between writing for oneself and literature per se. What was considered “official” recognition and what ways it could be achieved remained open to interpretation, and not all *Fioretti* contributors would have agreed with Yupp on this point.

The tamizdat format made the issue of acknowledgement transcend the constrictive boundaries of literary clubs, thus sidestepping Soviet cultural policies; it lifted authors into the realm of the alternative literary canon, which was subject to constant revision. The coverage of SMOG in the western press in 1965 and the publication of the almanacs *Sfinksy* and *Avangard* in *Grani* (No. 59, 1965, and No. 61, 1966, respectively) showed the mechanism for generating a literary and public reputation that went beyond brief and unsparing mentions in the Soviet press.

The very fact of a publication abroad, in tamizdat, particularly by a publisher affiliated with the NTS, was politically significant and could have se-

rious repercussions: Batshev was arrested on April 22, 1966, a few months after *Grani* published *Sfinksy*, and was exiled for five years.³³ Although the editors of *Fioretti* did not face direct persecution, the almanac fell victim to circumstances: an apolitical, purely literary project could not happen for non-literary reasons.

The (re)issue of the almanac in the United States in 2017 seemed symbolic: the return of the Malaya Sadovaya authors and their texts “from the otherworldly 1960s of Leningrad Petersburg [...] into the treasury of Great Russian Literature” (“из тех астральных шестидесятих годов ленинградского Петербурга [...] в сокровищницу Большой Русской Литературы”; Fioretti 2017: 142–143) followed the typical tamizdat pattern: the works came back from abroad to Russia. However, modes of canonization have changed since the end of samizdat and tamizdat and the obsolete division of literature into official and unofficial. Censorship diminished and even disappeared at some point: publishing abroad no longer entailed the risk of persecution for authors, so there was no need to make ethical compromises, and new technologies have made the distribution of texts available to everyone. The publication of *Fioretti* in 2017 was effectively – in full keeping with its subtitle – a literary monument to unofficial culture, to its protagonists and their strategies. We can possibly feel regret that this monument was not erected when, where and how it should have been, but it is still better to have a monument like it than nothing at all.

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33 One of the reasons why Batshev was arrested in December 1965 for the first time and sent for three weeks of compulsory psychiatric treatment was his support of the tamizdat authors Andrei Siniavsky and Yuly Daniel’.

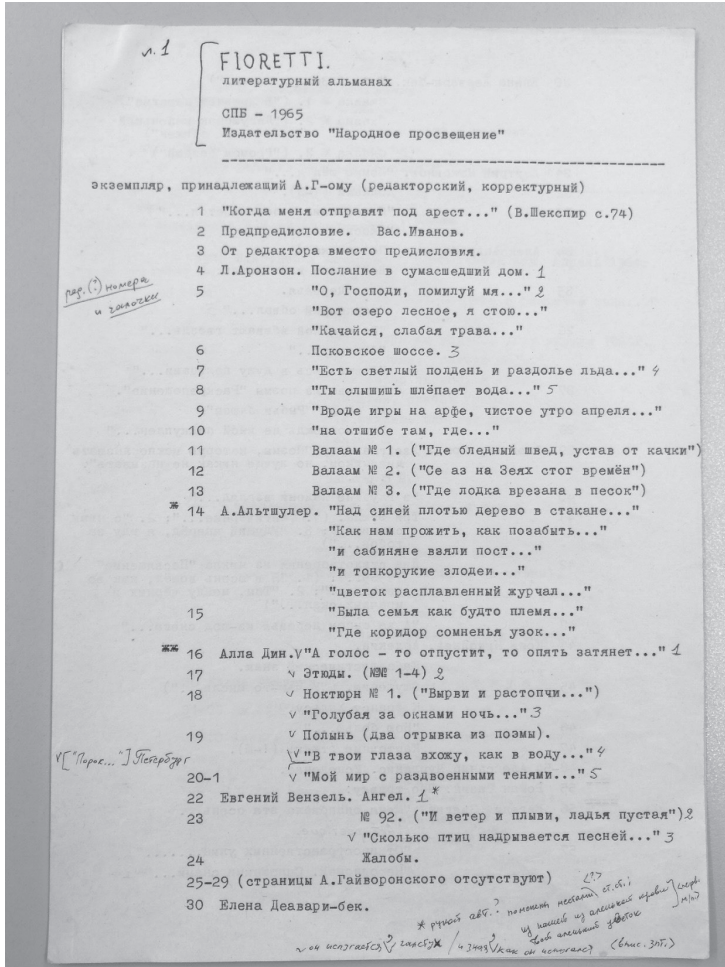
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Appendix

Vladimir Erl's inventory of the editor's copy of *Fioretti* and its typewritten copy from the late 1960s (Archiv der Forschungsstelle Osteuropa, Bremen, Germany)



2.

- 30 Елена Девари-бек. № 1. ("Воздух дымный")
Сказка № 1. ("В древнем царстве")
Сказка № 2. ("Лягушонок маленький обижен")
Сказка № 3. ("Гроном разбей")
- 31 Дмитрий Макринов. "Помню шёл я..."
- 32 Коллажи (1-3).
- 33 ["Я поставил в болоте стол..."]
"Скосив глаза..."
- 34 Александр Миронов. Перепёлка. 1
Всё время идёт дождь. 2
- 35 Петё деревьев.
"каркающий обвал..." 3
- 36 "За стенкой вбивают гвоздь..."
"Смотрят..."
"Впечатаясь в душу пальцами..."
- 37 3 глава из поэмы "Раскрепощение".
из цикла "Рыбы блюзы".
"Видно дождь не мной подкуплен..."
- 39 Владимир Эрль. Две главы из "Поэмы, которую можно назвать дневником, но лучше никак не называть".
(1. 7).
"в глубине ладони взгляд..."
- 40 Три этюда. (1. "Античёрные..."; 2. "с ними
сними..."; 3. "Идущий вперёд, я иду за
тобой...")
- 42 Два стихотворения из цикла "Посвящение"
(1965г.). (1. "Я в осень вошёл, как во
взгляд..."; 2. "Там, между чёрных и
мрачных скал...")
- 43 "А за окном деревья из-под снега..."
- 44 Коля Николаев. Арлекин. 1
Кабаллистический знак.
- 45 Ощущение. ("И чьи-то мысли...")
[К Франсу Хальсу.] 2
- 46 "Нюю болью..."
- 47 Карточные этюды. (1-III).
- 48-54 Александр Чурлянис. Исцеление.
- 55 Роман Разин. Про травку.
- 56 Евгений Звягин. "Меня опановала эта осень...
L'Art poetique.
"От пространственных улиц....."
"Не оплошай. Сплошными снами..." 1

3.

- 58-61 О.Ниворожкин. Клоунада.
62 Сказка.
63 "Душу зашьют в бремент..."
64-6 Царь Эдип.
67-72 Валерий Фёдоров. Письмо № 1. Письмо № 2.

варианты экземпляра Е.М-ой (перепечатка) ~~XXXXXX~~

- 4-13 Л.Аронзон. Послание в сумасшедший дом. Апрель 1964г.
Псковское шоссе.
"Есть светлый полдень и раздолье льда..."
"на отшибе там, где..."
Вроде игры на арфе....." 5 апреля 1964г.
"О, Господи, помилуй мя..."
"Вот озеро лесное, я стою..."
"Качайся, слабая трава..."
"Ты слышишь шлёпает вода..."
Валаам № 1.
Валаам № 2.
Валаам № 3.

14-15 А.Альтшулер отсутствует

- 16-21 Алла Дин. Ноктюрн № 1.
"Голубая за окнами ночь..."
Полынь (два отрывка из поэмы).
"В твои глаза вхожу, как в воду..."
"Порок, как порог..."
"Мой мир с раздвоенными тенями..."
Этюд.

30 Елена Девяри-бек отсутствует

31-33 Дм.Макринов отсутствует

- 34-38 Александр Миронов. 3 глава из поэмы "Раскрепощение"
из цикла "Рыбы блюзы".
Перепёлка.
Всё время идёт дождь.
Петь деревья.
"каркающий обвал..."
"За стеной вбивают гвоздь..."
"Смотрят..."
"Впечатались в душу пальцами..."
"Видно дождь не мною подкуплен..."

4.

44-47 Коля Николаев. отсутствует

48-54 Александр Чурлянис отсутствует

55 Роман Разин отсутствует

56-57 Евгений Звягинь отсутствует

25-29 Андрей Гайворонский. "Воззвал ко мне..."

"Порою вешней..."

"Не вынести, не утерпеть..."

"О, снизойди..."

Колыбельная.

Иисус Христос осенью 1914 года.

Напряжённое мгновение.

Романс Трансменестреля.

"Чего-то ждать, чего-то жажда..."

Ноктюрн.

22-24 Евгений Вензель. № 132.

№ 134.

№ 188.

67-72 Валерий Фёдоров отсутствует

Резюме (порядок имён):

(эпиграф)

Вас.Иванов. Предпредисловие.

От редактора вместо предисловия.

Л.Аронзон.

Алла Дин.

Владимир Эрль.

Александр Миронов.

О.Ниворожкин.

Андрей Гайворонский.

Евгений Вензель.

моя машинопись (на обеих сторонах)

листы с моей и не моей машинописью; установлены вошедшие в сб. тексты на основании пометок (моих и др.). Также: вписано название стихотворения, долженствующего войти (текста нет): Петербург ("Мой ржавый Петербург..."). Стихи "Порок, как порог..." - зачёркнуты.

После текста - список предназначавшихся для сб. стихов (рукой автора): Сонет № 23; "Полюби людей, безлюдность..."; "Длинные пальцы у пианиста..."; "А тело облитое густым загаром..."; "Судьба-треска рассыпалась по шпалам..."; "Омертвельной усталости рыцарь...". - Кроме первого стихи неизвестны.

5.

авторская машинопись, добавлена позже.

экземпляр Е.М-ой представляет собой неполную перепечатку редакторского; выбор текстов и имён производился по мало обоснованным причинам. Возможно в распоряжении копииста сб. находился не в полном составе.

Mark Lipovetsky

A Monument to Russian Modernism: The Ardis Vision of Contemporary Russian Literature¹

Abstract: The article discusses the role of the tamizdat publishing house Ardis in shaping the new canon of Russian literature. Ardis and its publishers Carl and Ellendea Proffer sought to restore the Russian modernist legacy, reconnecting it to contemporary Russian literature. This explains not only why they reprinted works from the 1910s and 1920s, and focused on Vladimir Nabokov and Mikhail Bulgakov, but also why their selection of contemporary authors included not only such recent émigrés as Vasily Ak-senov, Sasha Sokolov, Vladimir Voinovich, and Sergei Dovlatov, but also Boris Vakhtin, Andrei Bitov, and Fazil' Iskander, who did not leave the Soviet Union, and even Vasily Shukshin, Fedor Abramov, and Yury Trifonov, who enjoyed official recognition there. Along with their focus on historical modernism and its contemporary interpretations, the Proffers adopted an ethical approach to literature in constructing their canon, adhering to the hierarchy of cultural values shared by various nonconformist groups within the Soviet Union. Consequently, the Ardis canon of Russian literature absorbed different influences from the Soviet underground and American academia alike, which explains its importance for the history of twentieth-century Russian literature.

Keywords: Ardis, literary canon, Carl Proffer, Ellendea Proffer

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Ardis Publishers was founded in 1971, the brainchild of two young Slavists, Carl Proffer (1938–1984), a professor in the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and his wife, Ellendea Proffer-Teasley (born 1944), who also held a doctorate in Slavic

1 A Russian version of this paper was published in *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* (2014, No. 1) as part of “Ann Arbor in Russian Literature,” a selection of essays edited by Olga Maiorova, including papers delivered at a symposium organized by Maiorova and held at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in September 2013 on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of Carl Proffer’s birth.

Studies being a Bulgakov specialist. Carl died of cancer at the age of forty-six, but Ellendea continued running the publishing house until 2002. According to her account (Proffer-Teasley 2014), its period of financial success was the 1990s, when Russian literature in English translation was in high demand. Ardis's first decade, however, was of greater importance for the history of Russian literature: it was the heyday of *tamizdat*, which had finally become a powerful factor, influencing not only the circulation of Russian literature abroad but also the reception and reputations of various "unpublishable" texts in the Soviet Union.

Today, reading the Ardis catalogue is only a slightly less exciting undertaking than reading books with a horse-ridden carriage emblazoned on their title pages over thirty years ago. In this paper, I examine Ardis's Russian fiction catalogue of the 1970s and 1980s from the perspective of what we now know about the later trajectories taken by Russian literature, especially after 1991, when Soviet barriers "protecting" the readership from politically and aesthetically suspicious literature crumbled. This approach could destroy the reputation of any publishing house, including the most renowned and profitable ones. After all, there are always books whose publication is dictated by the spur of the moment, by personal connections or political relevance. Not only does Ardis withstand this challenge, however, but its roster of writers also has a great deal to say about the power relations that defined the late-Soviet émigré community and the post-Soviet literary world.

Ardis was the first Russian-oriented cultural institution in the US to disengage itself from the Cold War paradigm. The Proffers never received financial support from the CIA and similar organizations² which their colleagues and peers did on a regular basis. Ardis was not a non-profit organization – their books had good sales, but sometimes they were close to bankruptcy. At such moments, the Proffers mortgaged and remortgaged their family home. They also minimized expenses by doing all the work at Ardis that they could do on their own, while many of their collaborators and translators worked for free. They surrounded themselves with a circle of literati and scholars,

2 Based on the conversations with Ellendea Proffer-Teasley during the 2013 conference in Ann Arbor. Ellendea received the McArthur grant in 1989 which supported Ardis after Carl's death (see Proffer-Teasley 2015: 24).

colleagues, friends, and Carl's former and current graduate students, actively exchanging ideas and opinions about twentieth-century Russian literature. Ardis was a center for young Slavists who, following the example of the Proffers themselves, traveled to the Soviet Union on a regular basis, making friends with Soviet literati and their families, something that had not been typical among previous generations of American Slavists. Due to these new relationships, the Ardis catalogue absorbed influences from several informal literary circles in Moscow and Leningrad – first, the circle of Nadezhda Mandelshtam, whom the Proffers befriended and about whom Carl Proffer wrote a captivating memoir (Proffer 1987: 13–62); and second, the circle of Moscow liberal writers that emerged around Lev Kopelev and Raisa Orlova before their emigration to Germany in 1980 and that continued to function after their departure. (The *Metropol'* team, with Vasily Aksenov as its leader, was an offshoot of the Kopelev-Orlova circle.) Finally, there was the critical role played by Joseph Brodsky who, thanks to Carl Proffer's support, taught at the University of Michigan from 1972 to 1980. Brodsky naturally brought into the mix the values shared by his own group of friends in Leningrad.

Ardis thus unwittingly tackled the job of building a new canon of twentieth-century Russian literature. Indeed, it accomplished this mission, although the achievement has never been properly discussed, despite its incredible significance. Not only did Ardis assemble a new canon of Russian literature, but it also institutionalized it. For Soviet readers, the Ardis imprint was a sign of the highest recognition,³ which was why the lion's share of so-called returned literature during Perestroika consisted of reprints of Ardis books in leading Soviet thick journals, who frequently failed to identify their source. The enormous impact that Ardis's books had in the Soviet Union, as well as its influence on post-Soviet cultural processes, suggests that the Proffers not only echoed certain discourses already extant in Soviet culture but also reshaped them in a way that has still not been spelled out. My main goal here is to outline the potentialities and boundaries of this discursive formation.

3 Anecdotally, Konstantin Ernst, the CEO of Channel One Russia, is known to be an avid collector of Ardis books.

Certainly, it would be simplistic to treat Ardis only as a mouthpiece of the Soviet liberal intelligentsia's aesthetic values. For example, Ardis's decision *not* to publish Vasily Grossman's novel *Zhizn' i sud'ba* (*Life and Fate*, 1961; see Sarnov 2012) clearly reflects serious differences between the Ardis staff's ideas about literature and the informal "table of ranks" shared by Soviet liberals.⁴ Equally problematic is the suggestion that Carl Proffer's impeccable taste in literature was entirely responsible for Ardis's success (see, for example, the chapter "Tuman v Ann Arbore," in Gladilin 2008). People involved in Ardis recall that many editorial decisions were based on a consensus, although Carl's opinion always served as the tiebreaker.

It is also important to note that publishing contemporary literature was only one of many projects pursued by Ardis. The republication of important but frequently forgotten works by historical Russian modernists was no less prominent. Ardis also published a large series of memoirs, correspondence, and other nonfiction by authors ranging from Vladislav Khodasevich to Semen Lipkin. It was Ardis that printed the first collected works of Vladimir Nabokov and Mikhail Bulgakov, as well as all of Brodsky's original collections of poetry in Russian. We should not forget such important parts of the Ardis catalogue as new translations of Russian literature, ranging from nineteenth-century classics to the most recent underground texts, as well as the compilation of new anthologies of Russian literature in English, many of which are still used in university classrooms. Finally, Ardis published scholarly monographs on Russian literature and culture as well as its own journal, *Russian Literature Triquarterly*. Considering that all these projects were accomplished simultaneously, on a minimal budget, and with extremely limited staff, makes the entire enterprise especially impressive.

4 According to Sarnov, Proffer explained his decision not to publish Grossman as follows: "I haven't read it myself, but my staff members said that it wasn't interesting" (Sarnov 2012: 11).

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Back to the catalogue! For the sake of analysis, I have made three lists of contemporary Russian prose writers whose works were published by Ardis.⁵ The first two lists contain the names of authors whose books were published by Ardis in Russian and in English, respectively, while the third lists consists of writers whose works were featured in the anthologies of contemporary Russian literature edited by Carl and Ellendea Proffer. I have set 1991 as the time limit and excluded non-fiction works from the first two lists, nor did I include the almanacs *Metropol'*, *Katalog*, *Portfel'*, and *Glagol*, since their contents were predominantly determined by their respective editors.

Books in Russian

Vasily Aksenov (6)	Anatoly Gladilin (2)	Yury Trifonov (1 + two
Yuz Aleshkovsky (2)	Fazil' Iskander (3)	monographs in Russian
Filipp Berman (1)	Vladimir Maramzin (2)	and English)
Andrei Bitov (1: <i>Pushkinskii dom</i>)	Evgeny Popov (1)	Boris Vakhtin (1)
Sergei Dovlatov (3)	Sasha Sokolov (3)	Inna Varlamova (1)
Igor' Efimov (2)	Mikhail Suslov (1)	Vladimir Voinovich (4)
		Sergei Yur'enen (2)

Books in English

Fedor Abramov (1)	Fazil' Iskander (2)	Mikhail Suslov (1)
Vasily Aksenov (4)	Yury Miloslavsky (1)	Yury Trifonov (3)
Andrei Bitov (1: <i>Pushkin House</i>)	Yury Nagibin (1)	Boris Vakhtin (1)
Anatoly Gladilin (2)	Bulat Okudzhava (1)	Inna Varlamova (1)
Sergei Dovlatov (2)	Vasily Shukshin (1)	
	Sasha Sokolov (1)	

5 On Ardis's poetry collections, see Reynolds 2014.

Inhouse Anthologies

Fedor Abramov (1)	Fazil' Iskander (3)	Sasha Sokolov (2: <i>both from</i>
Vasily Aksenov (2)	Nina Katerli (1)	<i>A School for Fools /</i>
Natalia Baranskaya (1)	Vladimir Maksimov (1)	<i>Shkola dlia durakov)</i>
Vasily Belov (1: <i>Carpenter</i>	Vladimir Maramzin (1)	Yury Trifonov (3: <i>a short</i>
<i>Stories / Plotnitskie</i>	Bulat Okudzhava (1: <i>Lots</i>	<i>story and The Exchange</i>
<i>rasskazy)</i>	<i>of Luck, Kid! / Bud'</i>	<i>/ Obmen twice)</i>
Andrei Bitov (2)	<i>zdorov, shkloliar!)</i>	Boris Vakhtin (1: <i>three</i>
David Dar (1)	Evgeny Popov (1)	<i>short stories)</i>
Igor' Efimov (1)	Valentin Rasputin (2)	Inna Varlamova (2)
Rid Grachev (1)	Vasily Shukshin (2: <i>a short</i>	Vladimir Voinovich (1)
I. Grekova (2: <i>a short</i>	<i>story and Snowball</i>	Aleksandr Yashin (1)
<i>story and The Lady's</i>	<i>Berry Red / Kalina</i>	Sergei Zalygin (1)
<i>Hairdresser / Damskii</i>	<i>krasnaia)</i>	
<i>master)</i>		

When examining these lists, we should keep in mind the different ends pursued by Ardis in publishing these books. While their Russian-language books were mostly penned by authors banned by Soviet censors, their books in English pursued another goal: introducing the Anglophone world to the best writing by Russian authors, including those published in the Soviet Union (e.g., Trifonov, Abramov, Shukshin, and Nagibin). The latter task was even more pronounced in the anthologies, which were intended for university undergraduate courses in Russian literature and offered an even broader representation of Soviet writers: I. Grekova, Baranskaya, Yashin, Zalygin, and even Rasputin joined the writers already mentioned. In this way, Ardis established virtual contacts between the divided camps of Russian literature – Soviet, anti-Soviet, and non-Soviet. By summarizing these lists and noting the writers published by Ardis more than once, we can arrive at the Ardis “dream team” of contemporary Russian authors:

Aksenov (4/6/2)	Efimov (1/0/2)	Maramzin (2/0/0)
Iskander (3/2/3)	Shukshin (0/1/2)	Miloslavsky (1/1/0)
Trifonov (1/3/3)	Vakhtin (1/1/1)	Okudzhava (0/1/1)
Sokolov (3/1/2)	Varlamova (1/0/2)	Popov (1/0/1)
Dovlatov (2/3/0)	Abramov (0/1/1)	Rasputin (0/0/2)
Bitov (1/1/2)	Aleshkovsky (2/0/0)	Suslov (1/1/0)
Voinovich (4/0/1)	I. Grekova (0/0/2)	
Gladilin (2/2/0)	Yur'enen (2/0/0)	

A few “layers” emerge from this list. First, with notable exceptions, it showcases the émigré and “metropolitan” authors who entered the post-Soviet mainstream, filling the shelves of today’s book supermarkets in Russia along with Pelevin and Sorokin, Dontsova and Ustinova: Aksenov, Dovlatov, Iskander, Trifonov, Voinovich, Bitov, Okudzhava, and Aleshkovsky. Secondly, Sokolov, Vakhtin, and perhaps even Evgeny Popov represented different types of “experimental” writing, some of which have flourished, while others have withered. The presence of other writers in the list can be explained either by their prominence in the Soviet Union (Gladilin, Shukshin, Abramov, Rasputin) or their being Ardis staff members (Efimov, Miloslavsky, Suslov) and among the Moscow friends of the Proffers (Varlamova).

Two names stand out in the list, defining the spectrum of the Ardis-shaped vision of contemporary Russian fiction: Vasily Aksenov and Sasha Sokolov, each representing a long-term perspective stretching from the past into the future.

For the Proffers, Aksenov was the symbol of Ardis’s position vis-à-vis both Soviet literature and émigré literature, which was heavily dominated by Solzhenitsyn and *Kontinent*. While comparing Soviet literature with “wheel-chair basketball” (“there is something fundamentally wrong with it. And it is not really basketball”; Proffer 1987: 112), Proffer emphasized not only the obstacles imposed by censorship, but also the limits set by aesthetic conservatism: “In practice this means an all-thumbs imitation of the Turgenev line of the nineteenth-century Russian novel in characterization and style, including obligatory nature descriptions which sound like the Woody Allen parodies in *Love and Death*” (ibid.). In another article, Proffer returns to the idea of aesthetic censorship, which he argues is much more severe than politically motivated censorship, adding, “It is not very well known in the

West that form is almost as likely to get one banned by an editor or censor as content. This is absolutely true in the USSR, but even émigré Russian editors are on the whole conservative, traditional realists” (ibid.: 147).

From this standpoint, Aksenov’s prose was seemingly an alternative to both Soviet and émigré cultural conservatism:

The Burn, however, is not émigré literature, in spite of the place of publication or the location of the author’s body at the instance of publication. Aksyonov is one of the many important writers who have done the service of destroying what was left of émigré literature and beginning a unique new era in Russian literature. They have created not émigré literature, and not Soviet literature, but simply Russian literature.

(Ibid.: 127)

Today, thirty-three years after Ardis published *Ozhog* (*The Burn*, 1980), this statement reads like wishful thinking at best. Legible in *Ozhog* and *Ostrov Krym* (*The Island of Crimea*, 1981), Aksenov’s promise of aesthetic novelty turned into dire disappointment – a natural reaction to the works he wrote after the Soviet regime’s collapse. Especially telling was the shameless “Hollywoodization” of twentieth-century Russian history in his *Moskovskaia saga* (*The Moscow Saga* aka *Generations of Winter*, 1992), in comparison to which Rybakov’s *Deti Arbata* (*Children of the Arbat*) reads like *War and Peace*. Even more disappointing is Aksenov’s last, autobiographical novel, *Tainstvennaia strast’* (*A Mysterious Passion*, 2007). Supposedly dedicated to “his generation,” it combines rumor-mongering about former friends with frantic self-aggrandizing. Ironically, except for the autobiographical Vakson, the sole character depicted by Aksenov with great love and sincere respect is Robert Rozhdestvensky (Robert R.), a textbookishly mediocre *nomenklatura* poet who wrote lyrics for numerous pop songs and official poems à la Mayakovsky. I would argue that the choice of Rozhdestvensky as the only worthy parallel to the beloved Vakson betrays Aksenov’s underlying theme – the Soviet aristocracy, who sincerely believed in their inborn superiority and were tragically wounded by the fact that plebeians had disempowered them. It was no wonder that Aksenov perennially portrayed his circle of friends (never forgetting to emphasize their relationship to the former Soviet and

pre-Soviet elites) as the epitome of cultural, intellectual, and artistic preeminence, which naturally excluded any form of self-problematization. Aksenov's famous irony, invariably packed into stereotypical formulae, could only simulate such necessary intellectual procedures.

However, all these features had been present in *Ozhog*, *Ostrov Krym*, and *Skazhi izium* (*Say Cheese*, 1983), but they seemed insignificant or were even imperceptible in the light of the novels' scandalous political relevance. Now that this relevance has faded, we can say that Aksenov's influence on recent Russian literature has largely been negative. On the one hand, he has fashioned a template for post-Soviet glitz fiction, peopled with superhuman males and hypersexual women equipped with their author's patented irony and their ubiquitous contempt for anyone who does not belong to the "true elite." If in Aksenov's time elite status had been defined by a story published in the magazine *Yunost'* or a novel published by Ardis, the equivalent for his modern-day heirs would be a house in Rublevka or Zhukovka, famous suburban settlements for the superrich Moscovites.

On the other hand, Aksenov designed a model of the novel that was widely adopted in mainstream literature during the first decade of the twenty-first century. It was based on the combination of two incompatible elements: a rigid, typically dualistic spectrum of the ideas and preferences typical among Russian liberal circles, unproblematically inflated to a global worldview, frequently with historiosophical pretensions; and a set of superficially modernist and postmodernist devices and tricks, ranging from grotesque and absurd to easily detectable intertextuality and straightforward allegories (based on recognizable literary sources) which are deployed as a simulacrum of "complexity," thus concealing the author's dualistic vision and black-and-white cast of characters. We see individual variations on this model in the prose of Aleksandr Kabakov and Viktor Erofeev.

At Ardis, however, Aksenov was the biggest star among an entire constellation of writers from different generations – from Dovlatov, Voinovich, Gladilin, Aleshkovsky and Maramzin to Vakhtin, Popov and Miloslavsky – who were frequently much more talented than him but whose aesthetic resembled his. What united them? Carl Proffer's characterization of Voinovich's *Chonkin* is seemingly applicable to all of them: the "book is enjoyable in a way that is very unusual for Russian writing – relaxed and

good-humored, with no ‘cursed questions,’ no soap-box rhetoric” (Proffer 1987: 108). All these writers treated politically charged subjects with irreverent humor. All of them employed measured phantasmagoria fused with playful language but restrained by sometimes moralistic, sometimes sentimental, sometimes paradoxical, but typically linear plotlines. Admittedly, this characterization only partly encompasses Dovlatov and Maramzin, with their acute sense of everyday absurdity, yet even they shared with the other writers of this tendency such fundamental features as a strong belief in the presence of rock-solid norms, distorted and concealed by Soviet society, yet serving as a source of irony and sarcasm vis-à-vis abnormal reality. These norms could be interpreted variously as mere common sense (Dovlatov and Gladilin), the instincts of ordinary folk (Voinovich), corporeality (Aleshkovsky), or a western lifestyle (Aksenov). The stability of an unspoken albeit vague norm situated many of them – especially Aksenov, Dovlatov, and Voinovich – at the core of the post-Soviet mainstream. Their works echoed the post-Soviet intelligentsia’s profound longing for a sense of stability amid social and cultural turmoil, and thus unwittingly prepared the way for acceptance of Putin’s “stabilization.”⁶

However, it is the very presence of the invisible norm that decisively separated this prose from the modernist aesthetic, with its tireless problematization of all possible norms. Considering that one of Ardis’s major goals was restoring the heritage of Russian modernism, we should not be surprised by Carl Proffer’s stern judgements, in which he made no distinction between certain Ardis authors and the better Soviet writers. For instance, he wrote:

In contrast to Sokolov, writers over forty, whether they live in the USSR or abroad, and whether they publish in *Novyi mir* or in *Kontinent*, tend to be “realist” conservatives in form. It is impossible to tell the dissidents from the socialist realists. Trifonov, Iskander, Voinovich, Nekrasov, Solzhenitsyn – they are all men of the old school, in the grand tradition of Tolstoyan prose, or, less grandly, as it has passed through several decades and numerous Fadeevs. At Trifonov’s apartment a photograph of Ernest

6 On the difference of post-Soviet intelligentsia from its late Soviet predecessors see Iampol’skii 2018; Gudkov 2004: 650–736.

Hemingway hangs on the wall; Voinovich uses a rather old-fashioned narrator in *Chonkin*; and formally large parts of Solzhenitsyn novels can be said to be pure socialist realism.

(Proffer 1987: 110)

Proffer the publisher and Proffer the contemporary Russian literature critic did not always agree with each other. For instance, in remarks that applied equally to other Village Prose writers, he wrote that Vasily Belov's "folk rusticity might seem like a kind of reverse snobbery" (ibid.: 102) but did not make such remarks about Voinovich or Iskander, whom he considered "the most translatable and transportable of Soviet writers, despite his provincial subject matters" (ibid.: 103). He rightly accused Aitmatov of "a very heavy streak of sentimentality" (ibid.: 102) while failing to notice the same flaw in Aksenov's or Gladilin's writings. These apparent contradictions are not hard to explain: as a critic, Proffer wanted to see bolder departures from the stale realist canon of Russian literature, but as a publisher he had to make do with what was available at the moment. This internal tension explains the significance of Sasha Sokolov's work for Ardis. Sokolov embodied the radical alternative to Aksenov's "school" of middle-of-the-road quasi-modernism.

3

Although the number of Sokolov's works published by Ardis is significantly smaller than those of Aksenov, this is quite natural considering the overall number of Sokolov's books, all of which were published by Ardis, and the fact that *Shkola dlia durakov* was translated into English by Carl Proffer, a formidable task for any translator. In the introduction to *Contemporary Russian Prose* (1982), which included the complete translation of Sokolov's first novel, we read: "Although we have put him at the end of this introduction, Sasha Sokolov represents a new beginning, and *A School for Fools* is the central selection of this anthology" (Proffer C. / Proffer E. 1982: xxvi). Obviously, Sokolov stands out as Ardis's principal and most profound discovery in contemporary Russian literature. As early as 1976, in the article "In the Shadow of the Monolith," Carl Proffer wrote about Sokolov: "I think one event will leave a mark on the literature of this decade. This is the debut of Sasha Sokolov, a 31-year-old Muscovite" (Proffer 1987: 108). For Proffer, Sokolov's prose re-

joined contemporary Russian literature with Nabokov, the biggest star in the Ardis universe, and Nabokov's famous blurb for *A School for Fools* served as tangible confirmation of this link. In fact, all the hallmarks of Sokolov's prose, as highlighted in the aforementioned introduction to *Contemporary Russian Prose*, seem to be present in Nabokov's oeuvre as well:

The imaginative chronology and the few modest stream-of-consciousness passages may have been calculated partly to annoy traditionalist Russian readers, but the devices arise naturally out of characterization. The complexities of Sokolov's prose are amply rewarded by the fantastic lyricism, charm, and humor of every scene. Behind the most fanciful of digressions there is always a sense that the author is firmly in control, and the second reading makes one more aware of the careful plans and balanced architecture. [...] On the political level, one has to look much harder for an axe to grind, because except in the very broadest sense, Sokolov is indifferent to literature of social comment.

(Proffer C. / Proffer E. 1982: xxix)

In the Ardis catalogue of contemporary prose, only Bitov's *Pushkinskii Dom*, published both in Russian and in English, belongs to the Nabokovian tendency. However, when examining today's literary landscape, we may confidently discern the lineage established by Ardis's institutionalization of Sokolov as the heir to Nabokov. Significantly, this lineage is legible both in the style of certain mainstream writers (Tatiana Tolstaya and Olga Slavnikova) and, on a much deeper level, in the neo-avantgarde/modernist prose of Aleksandr Goldshtein, Denis Osokin, Nikolai Kononov, Valery Votrin, Lena Eltang, Igor' Vishnevetsky, and Aleksandr Il'ianen, among others. Mikhail Shishkin, who (along with Sorokin) succeeded in injecting neo-modernist complexity directly into Russian mainstream literature, most spectacularly continues the trajectory launched in *A School for Fools*: no wonder that Sokolov has spoken so highly of him.

At the same time, tellingly, Sokolov can hardly compare in terms of post-Soviet popularity with Aksenov, given of course, that he is much less

prolific than Aksenov and his poetics is much more complex.⁷ Possible frustrations aside, this fact can be interpreted as testimony to the efficacy of Ardis's model for contemporary Russian literature. It contained two divergent trajectories: one leading to the post-Soviet mainstream and pop literature, and another that has proven rich enough to nourish experimental and neo-modernist literature thirty years later. In fact, one layer cannot exist without another, and Proffer's design has proven not only steadfast but also programmatic. It is also quite possible that Proffer would not agree with the reception of Sokolov and his followers as cultural innovators. In one of his last articles, Proffer wrote:

I purposefully do not say "experimentalists," because the most obvious figures who are commonly pigeon-holed here – Sasha Sokolov, Andrei Sinyavsky – are, for all their innovations, traditionalists in the best sense of the word. Like other experimenter-traditionalists, Sinyavsky and Sokolov have the advantage of almost total ignorance of the ideas educated people associate with Joyce and others in the period around WWI. Otherwise, much of their fiction would be irrelevant.
(Proffer 1987: 155)⁸

Proffer's critique was not entirely accurate: the relevance of Sokolov and Siniavsky to Russian literature actually increased when Joyce, Nabokov, and other so-called high modernists were made widely available in Russian – i.e., during the Perestroika years of 1987–1990, when the whole body of literature banned in Russian had been published in literary journals. However, I would suggest that we should read this statement as a sign of Proffer's dissatisfaction with the lack of artistic innovation in contemporary Russian literature. (This

7 For instance, the Russian State Library contains twenty-four records of different editions of books by Sokolov (including those published by Ardis) as opposed to 288 records for Aksenov.

8 See also Proffer's characterization of Sokolov in his letter to Nabokov: "he is surprisingly uncouth and uneducated – he has only the most general idea of your work" ("он на удивление неотесан и необразован – о Вашем творчестве имеет лишь самое общее представление"; Glushanok/Shvabrin 2005: 163).

dissatisfaction, by the way, explains why the Ardis catalogue includes, among all things Slavic, Douglas Fowler's *A Reader's Guide to "Gravity Rainbow."*)

Looking at the general thrust of the Ardis catalogue, we can see in it an overarching desire to establish *continuity* between the Golden Age of Russian literature and modernism, between repressed or surprisingly invisible segments of Soviet literature and the Soviet underground of the sixties, seventies, and eighties. Among nineteenth-century authors, the Proffers give more preference to Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky than to Turgenev or Chekhov; among Russian modernists, they valued Nabokov higher than anybody, placing Bulgakov and Platonov next to him on the top of their aesthetic hierarchy; and among contemporary authors, priority went to Brodsky, Sokolov, and Aksenov. Different generations of writers in this genealogy are united by their gravitation to either grotesque, or playful, or simply "complicated form" (to use Shklovsky's term). The line stemming from Lev Tolstoy, passing through socialist and social realism and on to Trifonov and Iskander, was represented as well, but significantly less spectacularly than the first one. The diversity and richness of the literature, scholarship, and translations published by Ardis advanced a radically new vision of the Russian literary canon. This was Russian literature that had escaped undamaged (or sustained minimal damage) from the Soviet era and its aesthetic dictates. Indeed, this was a new canon of Russian literature, and pride of place within it rightfully belonged to Russian modernism as the true golden age of Russian culture. This was a modernism not limited to the pre-revolutionary decades of the twentieth century but stretching across the Soviet period from Andrei Bely to Sasha Sokolov.

The panorama of Russian modernism unfurled by Ardis was not only amazingly detailed and nuanced but also free of many of the taboos shared by the Russian-Soviet liberal intelligentsia: note, for instance, the presence of Mikhail Kuzmin's *Kryl'ia* (*Wings*) and *Zanaveshennye kartinki* (*Curtained Pictures*), Evgeny Zamiatin's *Nechestivye rasskazy* (*Blasphemous Stories*) and Eduard Limonov's *Russkoe* (*Russian*). Ardis's practical conception of a modernism-centered canon of Russian literature completely justifies its laudably consistent resistance to traditional realism, with its ideological humorlessness, "cursed questions," and "soap-box rhetoric" to borrow Proffer's expressions. It also explains the absence from the Ardis catalogue of Grossman's

Life and Fate, Fridrikh Gorenstein's novels (only a single novella of his was published by Ardis, but as a part of the *Metropol'* almanac), and Georgy Vladimov's prose. (Siniavsky's prose was aesthetically congenial to the Ardis stable of authors – to Sokolov's wing, of course – but he had his own publishing house, Sintaksis.)

It is well known that the Proffers communicated closely not only with Nabokov, but also with Nadezhda Mandelshtam and other "widows of Russia," who, in Carl Proffer's words, "preserved the genuine Russian culture which was locked up, blotted out, censored and unmentionable not only in the official press, but everywhere" (Proffer 1987: 26). Furthermore, as we can see clearly when reading Proffer's brilliant memoirs, while he perceived these people as the living and breathing manifestation of the intimate connection between the 1910s and the present, he saw Nadezhda Mandelshtam (much like Nabokov) as an epitome of the resistance of modernist values, aesthetic and ethical alike, to Soviet terror and the temptations of Soviet conformism. As embodied by Mandelshtam and Nabokov, modernist ethics were as distant from American puritanism as from Soviet hypocrisy; they had more in common with the western nonconformist mores of the 1970s. Their ethical principles appeared inseparable from aesthetic ones, even and especially in the context of modernism, which fearlessly tested the limits of traditional ethics along with other social norms. This modernist ethics required from writers consistency with their own texts and hardly tolerated compliance with authoritarian or collectivist normativity.

Proffer ironically spoke of "the dominant Russian view that a good book cannot be written by a bad person" (ibid.: 35); "a conspiracy to deny human attributes to beloved writers" (ibid.: 35); and other opinions about literature "at least partly based on the civic position of the writer" (ibid.: 44). However, it is easy to see traces of these "Russian" tendencies in his own critical prose and memoirs. For instance, when writing about the late Valentin Kataev's "Mauvist" books, he could not restrain his disgust:

departures from normal chronology must be comprehensible without much page turning, and even then, it is allowed mainly to writers over seventy who have proved their loyalty, old men like Kataev, who [voted]

to throw Pasternak out of the Union of Writers in 1958, and dutifully attacked Solzhenitsyn a decade or so later.

(Ibid.: 148)

Proffer did not mention, of course, that Kataev had introduced Soviet readers to an entire generation of writers, including such Ardis stars as Aksenov and Gladilin, and that it was Kataev who produced such radically modernist texts of the late Soviet period as *Sviatoi kolodets* (*The Holy Well*, 1966) or *Uzhe napisan Verter* (*Werther Is Already Written*, 1979). These novels were not published by Ardis, although Kataev's early novella *Rastratchiki* (*The Embezzlers*, 1926) was translated and published by the Proffers.

Even more tellingly, when defending Nadezhda Mandelshtam from Veniamin Kaverin's accusations⁹, Proffer failed to notice that Kaverin's arguments were quite similar to Tamara Ivanova's still unpublished critique of Kataev's *Almaznyi moi venets* (*My Diamond Crown*, 1978) in which she contended that this writer's position in Stalin's time was immoral and that his multiple acts of betrayal deprive him of a right to depict such figures as Babel' or Pasternak in the frivolous tone as his close friends, a controversy in which Proffer clearly took Ivanova's side. In Proffer's rendering, the emphasis on ethical aspects of the writer's stance was another facet of the same persistent quest for continuity, only now projected onto the relations between the writer and their oeuvre. Proffer methodically rejected the "Russian" idea of a writer's biography as a saint's life and defended Nabokov's *Lolita* from Nadezhda Mandelshtam's moralistic attacks by emphasizing that, in life, writers are different from their protagonists, and even their narrators are products of their imagination. In other words, Proffer stressed the distinction between the literary text, its author's cultural myth, and the person behind the myth. Proffer, nevertheless, was quite attentive to the way the parts of this triad were correlated. The dialectics of literary text, cultural myth, and authorial persona was fundamental to his understanding of (Russian) modernism. In

9 Veniamin Kaverin sent to samizdat an open letter to Nadezhda Mandelshtam in which he criticized her for harsh characteristics of cultural figures victimized by the regime, such as Akhmatova, Meyerhold, Bulgakov, and especially Tynianov in her *Vtoraia kniga* (1972; *Hope Abandoned* in English translation). In his rebuttal to this letter, Proffer also provided its full translation (see Proffer 1974).

this respect, Proffer's description of Solzhenitsyn is symptomatic: "One could deduce that Solzhenitsyn feels great kinship with Lenin. [...] The portrait of Lenin [in *Lenin v Tsiurikhe* / *Lenin in Zurich*] is being called a self-portrait of the author" (Proffer 1987: 106). Lenin is certainly an anti-hero in Solzhenitsyn's cultural mythology (while the hero is typically the writer's alter ego), so the similarity between Lenin's and Solzhenitsyn's personae functions as a powerful deconstruction of the fundamental opposition in Solzhenitsyn's literary text.

This fusion of ethics and aesthetics was probably the defining feature of the discourse shared by the modernistically inclined, nonconformists of several generations in Moscow and Leningrad. It is this sensibility that Proffer transformed into the implicit foundation of the Ardis Russian literary canon. Perhaps this hypothesis could explain certain lacunae in the Proffer's panorama of Russian modernism, as well as in the then-contemporary Russian literature. As for the former, the Ardis catalogue notably lacks such prominent Russian modernists as Vasily Rozanov, Daniil Kharms (although Aleksandr Vvedensky's collected works were first published by Ardis), early Il'ia Erenburg (e.g., the novels *Khulio Khurenito* (*Julio Jurenito*) and *Burnaia zhizn' Lazika Roitshvanetsa* (*The Stormy Life of Lazik Roitschwantz*)), Georgy Ivanov, the Lianozovo poets, the entire second wave of emigration, including such daring modernists as Nikolai Morshen and Yuri Ivask, as well as Vladimir Vysotsky (except for *Metropol'*) – and Kataev.

For similar reasons, Ardis's take on contemporary literature, despite Proffer's quest for more radical innovation, did not embrace literary strategies that, as we now know, distilled a Russian postmodernism that was the most far-reaching extension of and departure from the Russian modernist tradition. These strategies stemmed from the opposite end of the cultural spectrum. On the one hand, they had their source in the deconstruction of official literature, which also led to the problematization of the liberal intelligentsia's cultural canon: this strategy was most pronounced in the works of the Moscow conceptualists, among others. On the other hand, these innovative strategies were inspired by immersion into parts of life excluded from cultural visibility (socialist realist and modernist alike), including hypernatural depictions of the dregs of life; the horrors of the quotidian, interpreted as the myth-like, "perennial" human condition; and "deviant" (non-normative)

sexuality. In the 1970s and 80s, the first tendency was vividly manifested in poetry by Igor' Kholin, and in prose by Liudmila Petrushevskaya and the young and then-little-known Vladimir Sorokin, as well as Rozanov's underappreciated heir Pavel Ulitin. The second tendency was epitomized by the prose of Evgeny Kharitonov, and to a certain extent, Yuri Mamleev (whom Proffer mentions in one of his critical articles). These tendencies were, in fact, mutually complementary: Kholin's poems gravitate more towards hypernaturalism than conceptualism. Prigov, although he was one of the leaders of Moscow conceptualism, had high praise for Kharitonov's prose:

Kharitonov was [...] a unique, somewhat unimaginable person who has made his life the subject of direct, unreduced literary apprehension, and literature, the principal import of his interests, feelings, and actions. Perhaps, since Rozanov, our literature has not known such an example of an intimately marginal way of abiding in art, which requires the resolution of modern literary and linguistic problems on the extremely, riskily sincere level and matter of the [author's] personal life.

Харитонов явился [...] уникальным, даже в некоторой степени немислимым человеком, сделавшим свою жизнь предметом прямого, нередуцированного литературного осмысления, а литературу – основным смыслом своих жизненных интересов, переживаний и поступков. Пожалуй, со времен Розанова не было в нашей литературе такого примера интимно-маргинального способа бытования в искусстве, которое требует разрешения современных литературно-языковых проблем на предельно откровенном, рискованно-откровенном уровне и материале личной жизни.

(Prigov 2019: 338)

The same could be said of Ulitin, whose experimental, fragmentary prose is still underappreciated despite several significant publications of his work.

Probably the most brilliant example of the fusion of a conceptualist critique of cultural canons (official and intelligentsia alike) and Menippean exploration of the social “lower depths” can be found in Venedikt Erofeev's *Moskva – Petushki* (*Moscow to the End of the Line*, 1970), which was not

published by Ardis. During the 2013 Carl Proffer memorial conference in Ann Arbor, however, Ellendea Proffer mentioned that, thanks to Bitov's invitation, she had attended a reading of *Moskva – Petushki* by Erofeev, and she had been excited and eager for Ardis to publish the book immediately. However, the plan fell through because Erofeev had already granted the publication rights for his prose poem to another western publisher – apparently, to YMCA Press, where its first book edition was published in 1977.

Curiously, some of these writers, it seems, had niches ready and waiting for them in the Ardis catalogue. For instance, with a certain effort, the prose of Inna Varlamova, Nina Katerli, and I. Grekova could be read as diluted versions of Petrushevskaya's. Suslov's *Plakun-gorod* would appear to be an homage to Mamleev, while Aleshkovsky reads like a predecessor of Venedikt Erofeev, and Evgeny Popov like his lesser imitator. However, it is the very sense of normativity or, rather, the striving for an unshakeable norm (if not stylistic, then cultural or existential) that separates Varlamova, Suslov, Aleshkovsky, and Popov from Petrushevskaya, Mamleev, Erofeev, Kholin, and Kharitonov. I have no information that would explain why none of these writers was admitted to the Ardis ark of contemporary literature. In any case, their transgressions did not jibe with the Ardis panorama of Russian literature precisely because they would have undermined the modernist canon. They mined the despicable socialist realist canon and the equally dreadful Soviet quotidian as sources for cultural myths, thereby annihilating the very concept of cultural mythology and rendering it relativistic and even humorous. Moreover, such writers as Erofeev, Kharitonov, Ulitin, and Prigov (much like Rozanov and Kharmis before them) manifestly collapsed the structural distinction between text, cultural myth, and authorial persona (which was fundamental to the interpretation of modernism discussed above), thus critically aligning their texts against the modernist heritage.¹⁰

10 For example: "[М]ы были totally критичны. Любой дискурс, попадавший в наше поле зрения, моментально связывался нами с дискурсом власти. Например, Пушкин и Маяковский были для нас нормальными представителями советской власти. Более того, такие нравственные ориентиры для предыдущего поколения, как Ахматова и Пастернак, после их публикации, с нашей точки зрения, попадали в дискурс власти. Я помню разговор с Эриком Булатовым, после того, как я использовал в своих стихах некоторые мотивы из Ахматовой.

These exclusions, however, only emphasize the significance of the Ardis canon of Russian literature. It has become a thriving model of Russian modernism and, thus, its integral part, since the selfsame logic shaping the canon stemmed from the texts that Ardis published. As conceived and realized by the Proffers, Ardis effectively crowned the century-long evolution of Russian modernism by building a bridge that figuratively and literally connected Nadezhda Mandelshtam and Sasha Sokolov with Nabokov, on the one hand, and twentieth-century writers with Pushkin, Gogol, and Dostoevsky, on the other. There is no better monument to Russian modernism than the one sculpted by Ardis, nor could there be a better one.

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Эрик меня упрекнул: 'Как же так можно с Ахматовой?!' Для меня уже тогда Ахматова была представителем 'левого' Союза писателей, а он, хоть и левый, но все же – Союз писателей" (Prigov/Shapoval 2001: 94–95). ("[W]e were totally critical. We immediately linked any discourse that came into our field of view with the discourse of power. For example, we thought of Pushkin and Mayakovsky as ordinary officials of the Soviet power. Moreover, when such moral milestones of the previous generation as Akhmatova and Pasternak were published, they made their way into the discourse of power. I remember a conversation I had with Erik Bulatov after I had used some Akhmatova motifs in my poems. Erik reproached me: 'How can you do this to Akhmatova?!' Even then I saw Akhmatova as a member of the 'left' wing of the Union of Writers, and although it was the left wing, it was still part of the Union of Writers").

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Part II

Literary Investigation

Paolo Mancosu

Pasternak and Costello: What We Know and What We (Still) Don't

Abstract: In this article I report on all the information I have been able to collect and discover concerning the contacts between Boris Pasternak and Desmond Patrick (“Paddy”) Costello. In each section, I begin by surveying the literature that was available to me when I began this investigation and then describe the new finds. The relation between Costello and Pasternak has been mainly emphasized by scholars interested in Costello. By contrast, Costello has only been rarely mentioned by Pasternak scholars. One of the reasons is that no document by Pasternak mentions Costello. However, Lazar Fleishman had already mentioned Costello’s work on *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* as the source of the *tamizdat* phenomenon. In this paper, I give further evidence for Fleishman’s claim. Not only did Costello consult Pasternak for *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* but by arranging the smuggling of an early version of *Doctor Zhivago* from Moscow to Oxford in 1948, he was the first link in a chain that would lead to the eventual publication of *Doctor Zhivago* in the West in 1957.

Keywords: Boris Pasternak, Desmond Patrick Costello, Tamizdat, *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*, *Doctor Zhivago*

Introduction

In this article I report on all the information I have been able to collect and discover concerning the contacts between Boris Pasternak and Desmond Patrick (“Paddy”) Costello. In each section, I begin by surveying the literature that was available to me when I began this investigation and then describe the new finds. The relation between Costello and Pasternak has been mainly emphasized by writers and scholars interested in Costello (most prominently McNeish 2007, Lenihan 2012, and Munro 2018). By contrast, Costello has only been rarely mentioned by Pasternak scholars. One of the reasons is that no document by Pasternak mentions Costello. Costello’s name is mentioned

only once in the editorial remarks in the eleven-volume edition of Pasternak's *Collected Works* (*Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Pasternak 2004a; see Vol. IX: 557 where he simply appears as “Костелло” without even a mention of his first name; the name does not even appear in the index). In the secondary literature on Pasternak, Costello is not mentioned in any of Pasternak's major biographies,¹ but he did not completely escape scholarly attention. His name appears in Ljunggren/Fleishman (2013: 541) and Fleishman/Jangfeldt (2013: 571). This last publication is especially important, as it points out that Costello's consultation with Boris Pasternak in 1946–1947 on *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* can be considered as the source of the *tamizdat* phenomenon.² Costello is also briefly mentioned in Davidson 2009b and more extensively in Mancosu 2016.

But there are also two “anonymous” contexts in which Costello appears in the Pasternak literature. The first is as the author of an anonymous article “Impressions of Boris Pasternak” (Anonymous 1958). The attribution to Costello was rumored and Gleb Struve³ related it in personal conversation to Lazar Fleishman conveying that he considered it reliable. The tentative attri-

1 A fact remarked by Lenihan 2012: 25.

2 “In his work on the anthology, Costello made extensive use of Pasternak's advice, so it can be considered a forerunner of the future ‘tamizdat’” (В своей работе над антологией Костелло вообще широко пользовался консультациями Пастернака, так что ее можно считать предвестием будущего ‘тамиздата’”; Fleishman/Jangfeldt 2013: 571). – All translations are mine, P. M., unless otherwise noted. Authorial interventions and comments are in angular brackets (<...>), omissions in box brackets ([...]).

3 Gleb Petrovich Struve (1898–1985) was a Professor of Slavic Languages and Literature first at University College London and then at UC Berkeley. He was the author of numerous publications, including some important essays on *Doctor Zhivago*, and edited many authors suppressed in the Soviet Union. In 1961, together with Boris Filippov, he edited a three-volume collection of Pasternak's writings for the University of Michigan Press. His *Nachlaß* is preserved at the Hoover Institution Library and Archives at Stanford.

bution was first indicated in print⁴ in Fleishman (1984: 185, see also 2005: 237). The correctness of the attribution will be shown definitively in this article.⁵

Costello also figures, although unnamed, as a “Commonwealth diplomat” in Isaiah Berlin’s essay recounting his encounters with Pasternak and Akhmatova (see below).

In this paper, while adding new information, I will chronicle everything that is known about the relationship between Pasternak and Costello and I will also show, strengthening Fleishman’s claim, that Costello played an important role in the history of tamizdat. Not only did Costello consult Pasternak for *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* but by arranging the smuggling of an early version of *Doctor Zhivago* from Moscow to Oxford in 1948, the details of which will be provided below, he was the first link in a chain that would lead to the eventual publication of *Doctor Zhivago* in the West in 1957.

1. Costello’s first two years in Moscow: 1944–1945

The story of how Desmond Patrick (“Paddy”) Costello⁶ became a diplomat in Moscow has been recounted in Templeton’s history of the New Zealand

4 Fleishman says (1984: 185, note 123): “according to some conjectures, this anonymous memoirist was D. P. Costello” (“по некоторым предположениям, этим анонимным мемуаристом был Д. П. Костелло”). Here is the history of the discussion of Anonymous 1958 with many thanks to Lazar Fleishman who provided these details and made me aware of the importance of Anonymous 1958 for my research. Gleb Struve was the first to address Anonymous 1958 in Struve 1959. Anonymous 1958 contained a reference to an unknown (and unwritten) project of Pasternak’s poem on Stalin amidst the disasters of collectivization and was also one of the earliest reports on the 1934 telephone conversation on Osip Mandelstam between Stalin and Boris Pasternak (see note 30). Fleishman (2009: 259–261, 2013: 271–273) discusses and summarizes Struve’s newspaper article and mentions Costello. Anonymous 1958 is also referenced, without mentioning Costello, by Fleishman in the introductory remarks to Pasternak (2004a, Vol. I: 38).

5 I will do this in notes 93, 94 and 95 but even before making the case I will use information from Anonymous 1958 taking for granted the authorship by Costello.

6 Desmond Patrick Costello was born in Auckland (New Zealand) in 1912. He went to Auckland Grammar School and studied classics at the Auckland University College of the University of New Zealand where he earned his BA in 1930 and an MA

Legation in Moscow (Templeton 1989) and in the rich biography of Costello written by James McNeish (McNeish 2007). Costello had learned Russian while stationed in Cairo in 1942 and when some Russian generals visited the New Zealand troops, he was able to talk to the generals in Russian while cracking a few jokes in the process. The Dominion reported the event on its December 11, 1943 issue. The news came to the attention of Alister McIntosh⁷, who inquired after the “humorous linguist” (Templeton 1989: 21, McNeish 2007: 146). Costello was recruited to be second secretary of the New Zealand Legation that was soon to open in Moscow. He was interviewed for the job in

in classics in 1931. He received a scholarship that allowed him to attend Cambridge University between 1932 and 1934, where he graduated with first class honours in the classical tripos. In 1935 he married Bella (“Bil”) Lerner. During the period 1935 to 1939 he was a member of the Communist Party. Between 1936 and 1940 he was lecturer in classics at the University of Exeter. In 1940 he was dismissed on unclear charges related to his political activities. In 1940 he enlisted in the 2nd New Zealand Division and served in Greece, Crete and North Africa. His linguistic skills (he knew several languages, including Russian) brought him to the attention of the New Zealand Department of External Affairs, which led to his being employed as second secretary for the New Zealand Legation that opened in Moscow in 1944. In 1947 he was made First Secretary of the legation and later Chargé d’affaires. He stayed in Moscow until June 1950 at which time he also closed the New Zealand Legation. During his time in Moscow he had contacts with Boris Pasternak and other Soviet literary figures. His political sympathies made him suspect to the British and the American intelligence services, but his boss, Alister McIntosh, managed to keep him with External Affairs for four more years through an appointment at the New Zealand Legation in Paris (1950–1955). But eventually Costello was forced to resign and leave External Affairs. He obtained the Chair of Russian at the University of Manchester in 1955 which he held until his death. He died at the age of 52 in 1964. As a Slavic scholar he is known for his second edition of *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* and for the edition of Griboedov’s play *Gore ot uma*. Costello’s reputation has been tarnished by the allegation that he was spying for the Soviets. Mercifully, this issue is not relevant to the topics discussed in this article. For detailed discussions of Costello’s life, or specific episodes in his life, see, among others, Templeton 1989, McNeish 2007, and Lenihan 2012.

- 7 Alister McIntosh (1906–1978), First Secretary of the New Zealand Prime Minister’s Department (1943–1966) and Permanent Head of the New Zealand Department of External Affairs (1945–1966). On McIntosh and Costello see Lenihan 2012, 2019 and Ross 2017, 2018, 2019a.

London in May 1944. He spent from April 7 to July 17, 1944, in the U.K. and then left for Moscow, arriving in Moscow on August 14, 1944.

In his first letter to McIntosh, his boss in Wellington, dated October 22, 1944, Costello commented on his attitude towards learning Russian:

I have devoted much effort to the language and am now getting towards the stage where I can fairly easily converse with a Muscovite on any general subject, i.e., to the stage where one can begin picking up impressions of some value from one's Russian contacts. Knowledge of the language is not very useful if it is not complete enough to enable you to pick up asides and half-finished sentences. To derive any advantage from the language you've got to know it really well; otherwise better to stick to English. At any rate, this is the principle on which I've been working, and I have been slogging away at Russian ever since I've been here. I have a lesson per day and also use the theater as my school. I read, say, "Cherry Orchard" or "Three Sisters" and then go off to hear the play beautifully enunciated and wonderfully acted at the Arts Theatre. The theatre, incidentally, is about the only relaxation here. There are no dancing-places, no restaurants, no cafés. You can entertain people at your place if you have a place, but the only outside entertainment is the theatre. Suits me alright; I am fond of opera and the play; but it is clearly not everyone's cup of tea. (ATL⁸, MS-Papers-6759-260)⁹

8 ATL = Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington. See the section on archives at the end of the paper.

9 In a letter dated January 20, 1945, Costello keeps McIntosh updated with his progress in Russian: "The arrival of the rest of the members of the Legation doesn't seem to have given me much more free time. For this the language problem is partly to blame. The Russian language is like a sack pulled over the head of the wretched foreigner. Those, like Ruth Macky and me, who have cut an eyehole or two in the sack have to lead by the hand those who are still in the darkness. [...] This language really is a formidable one. I haven't done too badly at it, and Ruth, who has been here three months less than I, knows a lot; but the rest are dependent on us very largely and not likely to master the language for a long time to come. [...] For myself I reckon I'll know Russian really well in ten years' time – and I think I am not boasting when I say I know it better than any of the other British diplomats here and as well as anyone who wasn't born here. But it really is a monster of a tongue,

The date of his arrival, August 14, 1944, gives us a *terminus post quem* for Costello's meetings with Pasternak which, as will be detailed later, began at the latest in December 1945.

As we are interested in Costello's contacts with Pasternak, we should immediately ask whether there were contacts back in the United Kingdom that would have facilitated the meeting between Costello and the poet. Keith Ovenden, the biographer of Costello's best friend, Dan Davin,¹⁰ has suggested as much. In *A Fighting Withdrawal*, his beautifully written biography of Dan Davin, he claimed: "He <Costello> was friendly with Pasternak, whom he met through Dan <Davin> and Winnie <Davin>. They knew Pasternak's sister Lydia, who lived in the Oxford suburb of Park Town, and whose daughter Ann was one of Delia's best friend at school" (Ovenden 1996: 263).

However, this cannot be correct. While it is definitely the case that the Davins knew Lydia Pasternak¹¹ and that their daughters were friends, the start of that relationship is to be put later than Costello's departure for the USSR and after Costello's first meeting with Pasternak took place. Let us look at the dates. Costello arrived in the United Kingdom, where he stayed in London and Exeter, straight from the army on April 7, 1944. He left England on July 17. By contrast, Dan Davin left the Army to go back to the United Kingdom, where he joined his wife Winnie in Bristol, on July 28. In other words, Costello left for Moscow before he could see his friend Davin, whom he only saw again in February 1946. There is no evidence that Davin knew

with all the difficulties of every tongue I know of, plus novel ones. I like it very much, and one of the advantages of my press-reading is that it means constant practice in Russian reading" (ATL, MS-Papers-6759-260).

10 Daniel Marcus Davin (1913–1990) was a writer and, as of 1945, an editor at Oxford University Press. Although born in New Zealand he lived most of his life in the United Kingdom. Among his earlier books are *Cliffs of Fall* (1945), *For the Rest of Our Lives* (1947), and *Roads from Home* (1949). He also wrote a memoir, *Closing Times* (1975, Oxford University Press). He became friends with Paddy Costello while serving during WWII in the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) in the Middle East. See Davin 2019 for Davin's memoir of Paddy Costello.

11 Lydia Pasternak Slater (1902–1989) was trained as a chemist but was also a writer and a translator. Her *Nachlaß* is preserved as part of the Pasternak Family Papers at the Hoover Institution Library and Archives. Delia Davin (born in 1944) was a friend of Lydia's daughter Ann (born in 1944).

Pasternak's sister Lydia before he moved to Oxford in September 1945. By then, Costello had been in the USSR for more than a year. In addition, it is quite likely that the Davins became friends with Lydia Pasternak only after December 1946 when they moved from East Oxford (77 Rose Hill) to North Oxford at an address (103 Southmoor Road) that is rather close to the one in Park Town where Lydia lived.¹²

So, how did Costello meet Pasternak? We simply don't know. All we know, and we will discuss this in section 2, is that they met before the end of 1945. On January 20, 1945, Costello wrote to McIntosh mentioning "a few 'intellectuals'" he has met who "hate the spying and the suspicion that permeate Russian life" (ATL, MS-Papers-6759-260), but this is too generic for inferring that Pasternak was one of the people Costello was talking about. Nothing else he writes to McIntosh in 1944 or 1945 (or even later for that matter) has any direct or indirect reference to Pasternak. We also have two interesting letters that Costello wrote to Davin in 1945.¹³ The first was written in Stockholm, where Costello had gone in August to meet his wife Bella ("Bil") and his children, Mike and Josie, who were moving from England to the Soviet Union to be with him. The letter is dated August 15 and the last page is dated August 19. However, as explained in the second letter, dated November 13, 1945, the August letter was sent together with the latter so that Davin received them at the same time. The August letter was the first one Costello was sending to Davin since he had left for the USSR. Indeed, he opens the letter by saying that since his move to Moscow he had only written letters to his wife.¹⁴ There are some very interesting reflections in this letter, in particular those mentioning his developing a more critical attitude towards the Soviet Union and

12 I thank Keith Ovenden who, consulted on this issue, agreed with my reconstruction of the events. I also thank him for many fruitful exchanges on matters related to Davin and Costello and for helping decipher some difficult passages from Davin's diaries.

13 The letters from Costello to Davin are for the most part preserved at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington. There are also some preserved in the Oxford University Press Archive. See the list of archival sources at the end of the article.

14 I did not have the opportunity to consult the letters Costello sent to his wife in 1944–1945.

his considerations on literary life in the Soviet Union. In this connection he also mentions Pasternak:

On the strength of a year in Russia one should, by current standards, have collected material for 8 2/3 books. If I ever wrote one on Russia it would be so thickly studded with “rather,” probablys, perhapses, tends and mights that it would be unreadable. I can say however that I have lost a good deal of what an American called my starry-eyedness about the USSR. Theoretically the thing is perfect. In practice I am certain I couldn’t survive there as a citizen. Even if I survived the housing and the food I’d undoubtedly be shot for temerarious remarks about the Holy Things. A Yankee diplomat is credited with the remark that the full weight of the Soviet system is felt by the intellectuals and I think that is true.
(ATL, MS-Papers-5079-437)

On the literary situation he had the following to say:

The censorship of literature is stricter than it was in fascist Italy (I chose Italy in particular because one of my favorite writers, Alberto Moravia, is an Italian and published under Mussolini books which were far more hostile in spirit to the regime than I can imagine in Russia). Mikhail Sholokhov is soon bringing out his first novel for many years and everyone is curious to see how it will succeed in tacking between truthfulness and conformity; Mikhail Zoshchenko doesn’t write anymore; the two best living poets, Boris Pasternak and Sergei Mikhalkov¹⁵ spend

15 The description of Sergei Mikhalkov (1913–2009), author of the text of the national anthem of the USSR, as the best Russian living poet together with Pasternak is rather astounding and shows that Costello’s aesthetic judgment in Russian literature was still at an underdeveloped stage. Costello included no poems by Mikhalkov in *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* (1948). One should contrast these judgments on contemporary poetry with those expressed just one year later – in the letter dated November 26, 1946, which I will cite later – which evidence a deeper command of the state of Russian literature.

their time translating from the English.¹⁶ The greatest poet Russia has had since the Revolution, Sergei Yesenin, hanged himself in 1925 at the age of 30; the other outstanding poet of that generation, Mayakovsky, waited another five years before committing suicide. In a word, the literary scene is not bright. Men with individual views are silenced or forced into line, and the applause (of the Government, not of the people) goes to stooges like Demyan Byedny, who died the other day (it was said in Moscow that Demyan died in consequence of the perusal of his own collected works, presented to him by an insidious Enemy of the People). What is interesting is that the people's taste remains good. The young educated Russians will not be persuaded that the Simonovs and Pogodins and other State-subsidized writers are any good. A bookseller told me, what I had already guessed from my knowledge of the Russians, that Yesenin, Trotsky's favourite poet, is by far the most popular of modern poets; I should say that, of all Russian literature, Checkhov is the most read author. Which is a good thing. I myself don't waste time any longer trying to read the people who are published today, but stick to the Russian classics and to one or two more recent people whom one can now pick up only in second-hand bookshops.
(ATL, MS-Papers-5079-437)

And in the following part of the letter he comes to reflect on his own attitude towards the Soviet Union:

All of this about the Soviet dictatorship was known for years to almost everyone outside Russia. I, however, did not know it. Before I came I was readier to believe in the villainy of man than I am now, and anti-Soviet books by men who knew Russia seemed to me to be, in Soviet phrase, the work of the "class enemy" – that is, that these chaps, more or less consciously aligning themselves with the "capitalist enemies of the so-

16 Lazar Fleishman suggested to me that perhaps Costello is confusing Mikhalkov with Samuil Marshak who translated Burns, Shakespeare and other British poetry. Even in this case, he adds, placing Boris Pasternak's name next to Marshak's "is also astounding and testifies to Costello's limited familiarity with the Soviet literary scene."

cialist State,” invented from their own imaginations the unpleasant tales they told about the Soviet Union. I paid no attention to them at all. How, indeed, could I reconcile the fearful stories of the purges and the less dramatic stories of inefficiency and corruption in the USSR with the pictures of laughing Red Army men and happy mothers and children on the cover of *Russia Today*? These chaps were just liars and their books worthless. I do not take the same attitude now. Very few people (there are some) are quite immoral. Most people, I think, believe what they write themselves, and there is probably a good deal of truth in books in which people like Chamberlain and Eastman attacked the Soviet Union. This I would not have admitted in 1939. This however is not the main question. One would like to be sure whether, on the net balance, the set up is good or bad (granting that it is neither as good as the *Daily Worker* or as bad as the *Chicago Tribune* makes out). The question is important in the case of a State like Russia which, in terms of contemporary political issues, represents not a transitional stage, as England or even America can be said to do, but a terminus. You will gather that my eyes have lost their assurance of “certain certainties.”

[...]

The upshot of all this is that I’m by no means sure what I think of the Soviet Union or of the world as a whole; I’m beginning to suspect that I’m a liberal, or perhaps an anarchist.

(ATL, MS-Papers-5079-437)

It is noteworthy that this letter already displays the seeds of a remarkable disenchantment with the USSR. This will be relevant when we comment on Isaiah Berlin’s appraisal of the relation between Costello and Pasternak.¹⁷ In his diary entry for November 27, 1945, Davin writes: “Two letters from Paddy, giving his modified attitude on Russia – and still being modified. But enough

17 Isaiah Berlin (1909–1997) was a British historian of ideas, political philosopher, and social theorist. Berlin, who had also worked in Moscow for the British Diplomatic Service, met Pasternak for the first time in September 1945 and saw him regularly until early January 1946, when he returned to England. They met again in 1956. These encounters are described in the chapter “Meetings with Russian Writers” of Berlin 2001 and 2014.

to see that he is now roughly where G¹⁸ and I have long been. I take this as confirmation. Very good letters” (ATL, MSY-3833).

The brief mention of Pasternak contained in the letter cited above gives no indication as to whether Costello had already met him personally. There is no mention of Pasternak in the next letter dated November 13, 1945. No other sources I have been able to consult indicate that by that date Costello had already met Pasternak.¹⁹ But if he had not until that point, he was soon to do so.

2. Berlin on Costello’s meetings with Pasternak in 1945

The starting point for any analysis of the relation between Pasternak and Costello is also one of the most problematic to evaluate. It goes back to Isaiah Berlin’s descriptions of his encounters with Pasternak in *Personal Impressions*. The passage related to Costello underwent a substantial change be-

18 G stands for Geoffrey Cox (1910–2008). Cox was a journalist who during WWII served in the New Zealand Army and became very close to Dan Davin and Paddy Costello. I owe the identification to Keith Ovenden who provided the following enlightening information: “The G is surely Geoffrey Cox. DMD <Dan Davin> had only recently arrived in Oxford to take up his position at the Press, and was still working on the first draft of his novel *For the Rest of Our Lives*, which was at the forefront of his mind. Some parts of the novel document political discussions between the three central characters, who are modelled on himself, Paddy Costello and Geoffrey Cox. He had the three of them in his thoughts from day to day. Also, Geoff, recently arrived back in England from the Div. in Italy, where he served up until Trieste had been secured, had reestablished contact with DMD and was an occasional visitor to Oxford. DMD also went to see him at his home in London. They were still the friends that the War had made, and were eager to catch up. Their intimacy waned with time, as professional life, families, and other pressures developed, but in 1945 it was very present” (email to the author dated September 20, 2020). I also thank Keith Ovenden for having improved my first transcription of this passage from Davin’s diary. On Cox see also Ross 2020.

19 Costello’s diary (Cahier), with one exception to be mentioned later, contains no essential information relevant to the topics treated in this article.

tween the draft version and the version published in *Personal Impressions*.²⁰ I will start with the draft version:

Pasternak then said that despite the positive role which the Communist Party had played during the war, and not in Russia alone, he found the idea of any kind of relationship with it increasingly repellent: Russia was a galley, a slave-ship, and these were the overseers who whipped the rowers; why, he wished to know, did a New Zealand diplomat, whom I surely knew, a man who knew some Russian and claimed to be a poet, and visited him occasionally – why did this person insist, on every possible and impossible occasion, that he, Pasternak, should get closer to the Party? He did not need New Zealanders to tell him what to do – could I tell this person that his visits were unwelcome? I promised to do so, but did nothing at all, partly for fear of rendering Pasternak's none too secure position still more precarious. The New Zealander shortly afterwards left the Soviet Union, and later changed his views.

(Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, MS. Berlin 522, fol. 38)

And later, recounting events that took place in 1956, Berlin wrote:

He told me that what I said was no doubt well-intentioned, that he was touched by my concern for his family (this was said a trifle ironically), but that he knew what he was doing: that I was worse than that New Zealander eleven years ago.

(Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, MS. Berlin 522, fol. 42)

Berlin circulated the draft version to several people, inviting comments. Among those who sent comments was Lydia Pasternak Slater, one of the two

20 This essay by Berlin was published in different versions: "Meetings with Russian Writers in 1945 and 1956" (1980 in the first edition); shortened version, "Conversations with Russian Poets" (given as a Bowra Lecture on May 13, 1980), in *The Times Literary Supplement* (October 31, 1980: 1233–1236), and with additions, as "Conversations with Akhmatova and Pasternak", in *The New York Review of Books* (November 20, 1980: 23–35). I will follow the version published in *Personal Impressions* (Berlin 2001 and Berlin 2014; first edition 1980).

Pasternak sisters, who both lived in Oxford. Although Lydia had no specific comments on the “New Zealander,” Berlin decided to soften this part on Costello and informed Lydia Pasternak Slater that he was going to do so. On March 20, 1980, he wrote to Lydia:

I think I shall have to soften the story about Costello – it is exactly as I told it, but there is no point in giving pain to the descendants, of whom there may be some – I shall try and make that vague also. BL did, of course, say to me: ‘I do not need New Zealanders to tell me what my attitude to the Party should be.’

(Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, MS. Berlin 214, fol. 45)

Lydia had, however, failed to recognize Costello, whom she knew personally (see section 5), in Berlin’s description. In a reply to the letter I have just quoted, dated March 31, 1980, she wrote to Berlin: “About Costello: it never dawned on me when I read about ‘the New Zealander’ that it was he, who was meant! So – maybe – others might also remain ignorant? *I* think you were vague enough; but maybe *I* am too *dense*?” (MS. Berlin 214, fol. 54).²¹ In the published version²² Berlin wrote:

Pasternak then said that despite the positive role which the Communist Party had played during the war, and not in Russia alone, he found the idea of any kind of relationship with it increasingly repellent: Russia was a galley, a slave-ship, and these were the overseers who whipped the rowers. Why, he wished to know, did a diplomat from a remote British ‘territory’, then in Moscow, whom I surely knew, a man who knew some Russian and claimed to be a poet, and visited him occasionally, why did this per-

²¹ I thank Henry Hardy for his help in finding this letter.

²² As detailed in note 20, there were actually several published versions. In the 1980 version published in *The New York Review of Books*, based on the 1980 Bowra lecture, under the title “Conversations with Akhmatova and Pasternak,” the “diplomat from a remote British ‘territory’” appearing in the next quote became a “Commonwealth diplomat” and in the quote following the next quote “the Commonwealth diplomat” became the “importunate Commonwealth diplomat” (see Berlin 1997: 535, 538). See also Lenihan 2012: 23.

son insist, on every possible and impossible occasion, that he, Pasternak, should get closer to the Party? He did not need gentlemen who came from the other side of the world to tell him what to do – could I tell this man that his visits were unwelcome? I promised that I would, but did not do so, partly for fear of rendering Pasternak's none too secure position still more precarious. The Commonwealth diplomat in question shortly afterwards left the Soviet Union, and, I was told by his friends, later changed his views.

(Berlin 2001: 225; Berlin 2014: 390–391)

And later, recounting events that took place in 1956, Berlin wrote:

He told me that what I said was no doubt well intentioned, that he was touched by my concern for his own safety and that of his family (this was said a trifle ironically), but that he knew what he was doing: that I was worse than that Commonwealth diplomat eleven years ago who had tried to convert him to Communism.

(Berlin 2001: 229; Berlin 2014: 395)

But not everyone failed to recognize Paddy Costello in Berlin's "vague" description. When the article came out, Costello's friend Dan Davin immediately wrote to Berlin – on November 8, 1980 – to suggest that Berlin should have interpreted the events differently:²³

The article is so beautifully done that it makes at least one ex-publisher feel water in his eyes and iron in his soul. But in it you speak of a 'Commonwealth diplomat' referred to by Pasternak and I must suppose that the person referred to thus discreetly is my old and dear friend Paddy Costello. You report Pasternak having said this and that about him, just as you very honestly report Pasternak's having made inferences and guesses about the state of your own feelings. But, in your own case, you make it clear – I am sure rightly – that Pasternak was guessing wrongly, though for psychological reasons easy to understand.

23 I first learned of this exchange from Lenihan 2012: 27.

What perplexes me is that you do not allow for a similar possibility of distortion when he is reporting what the diplomat said to him. Given Pasternak's isolation, extreme sensibility, and the hideous difficulties of his past and present circumstances, it seems to me quite possible that he could have misunderstood the sense, the burden, the intention, of what Costello, if it was Costello, was saying.

Moreover, these particular talks between you and Pasternak seem to have been in 1946 (I've not the copy beside me and so have not checked). But, when Costello visited us (visited with as the Americans say) in 1947 or 1948 he brought with him recent messages from Pasternak to his sister, and I seem to remember, some MSS of Pasternak's – poems perhaps or parts of *Dr. Z* – which I think he was to pass on to Bowra²⁴.

If my, and my wife's, memory is right on this point, does it not suggest that Pasternak's attitude to Costello was more complex, or became more complex, than his conversation with you would seem to imply?

(Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, Davin to Berlin; MS Berlin 214 fol 221-1)

Let's postpone the discussion concerning the details of what Costello might or might not have brought to England and when to section 5. Let us look first at Berlin's answer dated November 18, 1980:

You are right, the diplomat was of course P. C. – I did not mention his name not to give unnecessary pain to his friends or relatives: very few outsiders would detect who he was, there were plenty of Commonwealth diplomats in Moscow in those days. But Pasternak was perfectly explicit and was not speculating about motives, as in my case, but reporting recent conversations (the date is autumn 1945). He expressed annoyance, but not dislike. And all this is perfectly compatible with sending poems and messages abroad – by whoever was willing to carry them – after all,

²⁴ Maurice Bowra (1898–1971) was a poet and classical scholar. On his life and work, see Mitchell 2010. On the relation between Bowra and Pasternak, see Davidson 2009a and 2009b. Bowra published in 1943 *A Book of Russian Verse* which contained two poems by Pasternak. A second edition came out in 1948 (see Bowra 1948).

the man who took Zhivago to Milan²⁵ was a fully paid-up member of the Communist Party, in high favor in official circles in Moscow. All I think he sent to Bowra was a letter and a signed copy of his published poems – certainly nothing from Zhivago, which Maurice knew nothing about at the time.

(ATL, MS-Papers-5079-426)

Berlin offered to discuss the issue over lunch and in fact Davin and Berlin met on December 9, but the outcome was a “let’s agree to differ.”²⁶

Berlin, in his letter to Davin, seems unwilling to grant that a possible change of heart might have occurred in Pasternak after his first displeasure with Costello. However, a possible change of heart on Pasternak’s part would be quite consistent with Costello’s own development from a starry-eyed newcomer to Moscow to a more critical analyst of the Soviet situation. By the end of his stay in the USSR his watered down sympathies for communism were evident to many observers. For instance, Manlio Brosio, Italian Ambassador to the USSR, reports in his diary on June 8, 1950, that the Costellos gave a farewell lunch at the restaurant Aragvi. Brosio danced with Bil Costello. The end of the entry reads: “The curious highs and lows of the slave mentality of we diplomats. Even the Costellos, honest as they are, in the hope of getting another diplomatic assignment and not to go back to the obscure hard life of professors have put a lot of water in the wine of their pro-Soviet sympathies.” (Brosio 1986: 587).²⁷

25 The person in question is Sergio d’Angelo (b. 1922), an Italian journalist who played an important role in the story of *Doctor Zhivago*. On his role in the *Zhivago* affair see d’Angelo 2006 and Mancosu 2013, 2015, 2019.

26 Dan Davin to Michael King, August 4, 1981: “My impression is that Isaiah took too seriously the expressed feelings of a mercurial poet without paying enough regard to a friendship between Paddy and Pasternak that developed more fully later” (ATL, MS-Papers-8970-225).

27 “Curiosi alti e bassi della psicologia servile di noi diplomatici. Anche i Costello, onesti come sono, nella speranza di avere un altro incarico diplomatico e di non tornare alla oscura dura vita dei professori hanno messo molta acqua nel vino delle loro simpatie filosovietiche.” I will give two more sources witnessing the change. Lenihan cites a letter dated October 27, 1950 from David Kelly, British Ambassador in Moscow, to Oliver Harvey, British Ambassador in Paris, where we read: “On

Moreover, the unfolding of the interaction, to be chronicled in the remaining part of the article, suggests that there was a development in their relationship. This development can, however, only be inferred from specific events rather than statements by the protagonists. All we have on Pasternak's side is the *oratio obliqua* given to us by Berlin. As for Costello, although he often speaks about Pasternak in his correspondence with Davin, he does not allude to any aspect of their relationship that would be relevant to a better understanding of the situation.

It is evident from Berlin's recounting of the story and from other documentary evidence that Berlin arrived in Moscow a day or two before September 13, 1945 and left on January 7, 1949. Henry Hardy has reconstructed as carefully as the evidence allows the details of Berlin's first encounter with Pasternak and dates it between September 20 and September 30. Let's say late September 1945.

Berlin said that after meeting Pasternak for the first time he visited him almost weekly. In his article, he says that when mentioning Costello, Pasternak was reporting "recent" conversations. But I will now repeat the question raised in section 1: When did Costello meet Pasternak? Costello arrived in the USSR in August 1944. McNeish has no doubts that Costello met Pasternak several months before Berlin did: "But Costello – making the first of several visits to Pasternak – was there months before Berlin" (McNeish 2007: 180).

closer acquaintance with them <the Costellos>, I came to think that they had either been judged too severely or else (like a good many others) shed most of their illusions under the impact of life in Moscow. My judgment is that Costello (a rather idealistic and academic type, with a passionate interest in Russian literature) started with an emotional leaning towards communism, found something that was good and much that was bad in the reality, but continued to air 'pink' views out of sheer esprit de contradiction long after he lost faith in Soviet communism as a political system" (Lenihan 2012: 29; see also Ricketts 2017, where the British Ambassador in Moscow is, however, mistakenly given as Roger Makins). But Costello himself, already in 1945, refers to his change of views. In the letter to Dan Davin on August 15, 1945, that I have already cited, he wrote: "You will gather that my eyes have lost their assurance of 'certain certainties'. [...] The upshot of all this is that I'm by no means sure what I think of the Soviet Union or of the world as a whole; I'm beginning to suspect that I'm a liberal, or perhaps an anarchist."

Moreover he also claims that it was during the first conversation between Costello and Pasternak that Costello annoyed Pasternak:

During his posting to Moscow, Costello visited Pasternak many times. On the first occasion he irritated the Russian poet according to Isaiah Berlin, by criticizing Pasternak's lack of enthusiasm for the Revolution and attempting "to convert him to communism." But it seems the irritation may have been more on the side of Berlin himself, perceiving in (as he put it) this "diplomat from a remote British 'territory'", a rival for the favours of the great Russian poet.

(Ibid.: 174)

Both claims – that Costello went to see Pasternak many months before Berlin and the one concerning what happened "on the first occasion" – while not lacking in plausibility, are offered without a shred of evidence. I have had the opportunity to study the folders containing McNeish's research that went into *The Sixth Man* and some of the major sources he used as evidence for the biography. While many other claims he makes concerning the Costello-Pasternak relation in the book – without adducing sufficient documentary evidence – check out, here he seems to have allowed the narrative urge to make up for what the documents did not yield. There is no trace anywhere of how the *first* encounter between Costello and Pasternak might have gone. Moreover, no document I have been able to consult reveals when Costello first met Pasternak. Of course, it must have happened before the end of 1945. It is however consistent with the evidence we have that Pasternak might have met Costello after the former met Berlin, that is after the last third of September 1945. In that case, Pasternak's complaints reported by Berlin would have occurred not immediately but during one (or more) of their later meetings. Unless new evidence comes up this cannot be excluded.

What about McNeish's claims about the source of Berlin's alleged irritation was motivated by his seeing in Costello "a rival for the favours of the great Russian poet"? McNeish not only claimed that Berlin had his own antagonis-

tic motives towards Costello but that his memory betrayed him.²⁸ Lenihan 2012 discusses McNeish's opinions and I agree with him here that McNeish's claims about Berlin's motives amount to no more than mere speculation and that those about Berlin's cognitive fitness (memory) at the time of writing his essay are ungrounded. Lenihan 2012 had also already critically assessed some of McNeish's claims concerning the Berlin-Costello-Pasternak connection and found several claims by McNeish unsupported by evidence.²⁹ But as I mentioned, many of those claims can be supported by appropriate evidence. However, some of them can be refuted. I will come back to this later.

There is also unclarity over the issue of whether Berlin and Costello met in Moscow. It does seem quite plausible that Costello and Berlin should have met. Berlin intimates, in his narrative, that it would have been easy for him to convey Pasternak's message to Costello but that he had decided not to do so. He was certainly aware at the time of Costello and his reputation. In my book *Zhivago's Secret Journey*, I cite two letters by Berlin in which he claims that among British officials Costello's trustworthiness was questioned. In a letter to Chimen Abramsky, dated November 20, 1980, Berlin said:

28 "Berlin's recollections date from a period towards the end of his life when his recall was becoming distorted by age and prolonged eminence" (McNeish 2007: 350). To which Lenihan replies: "As to McNeish's reflections on Berlin's memory, in 1980, when the essay was written, Berlin was 71; he lived to be 88. Berlin readily concedes with regard to this essay (Personal Impressions, 157, footnote) that 'I know only too well that memory, at any rate my memory, is not always a reliable witness of facts or events, particularly of conversations which, at times, I have quoted. I can only say that I have recorded the facts as accurately as I recall them.' On the other hand, he notes that what he says he has 'sometimes described to friends during the last thirty or more years', and acknowledges ten friends who have read the first draft of the essay. Berlin's memory is not questioned when McNeish quotes him at length (180) on 'the atmosphere in Moscow' in 1945–1946. How Berlin's 'prolonged eminence' distorted his memory is not explained" (Lenihan 2012: 26). I should add that the letters Berlin wrote in the early 1980s do not indicate any loss of cognitive power, including memory (see Berlin 2015).

29 Lenihan (2012: 26) complains about McNeish's assertions not being backed up by any sources.

He <Costello> is, of course, the ‘Commonwealth diplomat’ <see Berlin 2001: 225 and 2014: 391> about whose efforts to get Pasternak closer to the Party the latter complained to me; Dan Davin of the OUP was a great friend of Costello’s – they were both New Zealand leftist intellectuals in their day – and he guessed this immediately. He is trying to persuade me that Pasternak got it wrong – I do not believe this. He told me about Costello’s tiresome visits while they were happening, in late 1945 – his views were no secret from British officials. If there was something one particularly did not wish the Soviet authorities to know, it was thought inadvisable to say it to Costello. Later, he may well have changed his attitude – I only say this to indicate that nothing he says about the Stalin/Pasternak telephone call is too reliable.³⁰

(Letter of November 20, 1980, to Chimen Abramsky supplied by the trustees of the Isaiah Berlin Literary Trust: © the trustees of the Isaiah Berlin Literary Trust 2020)

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- 30 The reference to the Stalin-Pasternak phone call is in reply to Abramsky’s observation that Costello had a different account of the Stalin-Pasternak phone call than the one reported by Berlin in his article. Costello’s published account of the phone call is in Anonymous 1958: 88–89. I do not know whether Abramsky was referring to this article or knew about Costello’s version in some other way. Here is the Costello version of the telephone call: “A few nights later a party was in progress in Pasternak’s flat when the telephone rang. The voice at the far end asked if that was Comrade Pasternak; Comrade Stalin would like to speak to him from the Kremlin. A moment later a voice with a perceptible Georgian accent spoke: ‘Is that Pasternak? This is Stalin.’ ‘Good evening, Comrade Stalin. By the way, this is not a leg-pull, is it?’ ‘No, no, this is Stalin, all right.’ At the name of Stalin there was a hush in the room. Pasternak said: ‘There are twenty-six people in the room and they’re all listening. Does that make any difference?’ Stalin said, ‘No, that’s all right. What’s this about Mandelstam?’ ‘I’d like to do what I can to help him.’ ‘Do you think he’s a very good poet?’ ‘You know, Comrade Stalin, you should no more ask one poet what he thinks of another than you should ask a pretty woman her opinion of another pretty woman’s looks.’ ‘Then am I to take it you don’t think much of him?’ ‘No, no, you’ve got me wrong. I’m a different sort of poet from him, that’s all. I think he’s a good writer.’ ‘Very well, thank you.’ Pause.

Additional evidence for Berlin's opinion concerning Costello comes from a letter to Joel Carmichael, editor of *Midstream*, dated February 11, 1992:

Did I really say about Davin 'What a terrible Communist'? I don't believe it. Of course he had been one, but by the time I met him there was some water in the wine – although he was devoted to Paddy Costello, who was certainly considered by MI5 to be an agent: his effort to persuade Pasternak to get closer to the Communist Party (reported to me by Pasternak) is sufficient evidence.

(Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, MS. Berlin 228, fol. 63)³¹

From these two letters it is clear that Berlin was aware of Costello's presence in Moscow in late 1945, and it is hard to believe that the two would not have crossed paths at some diplomatic reception or other. Even though we have no solid evidence of an encounter they shared social and professional circles.³²

Let us take stock. We know precious little about what happened in the relationship between Pasternak and Costello during the period going from August 1944 to January 1946. Anonymous 1958 (86) is however a strong indication that Costello and Pasternak first met in 1945, and not in 1944, for the article is explicit in delimiting the impressions of Boris Pasternak to the period 1945–1950. We do not know what brought about the first meeting. And from Berlin's reports it is obvious that something Costello said, at some

'Why don't you ever come to see me?'

'I should have thought it was rather your place to invite me.'

Stalin laughed and wished Pasternak a good evening and that was the end of the conversation. The next day Mandelstam was released. Pasternak had never heard from Stalin again" (Anonymous 1958: 88–89).

31 I thank Henry Hardy for having brought these letters to my attention.

32 In a review of Davin 2019, Ross confidently asserts: "The initial Costello-Berlin encounter was in Moscow in September 1945. The pair likely grappled intellectually from the start on a high wire without a safety-net, neither seemingly falling off during Berlin's four-month stay. (Their respective reflections are unknown, likewise whether they ever subsequently met face-to-face.)" (2019c: 9). However, this alleged encounter in September 1945 (or later for that matter) cannot be taken for granted, and until documentary evidence emerges, it remains conjectural.

point or other, annoyed Pasternak. But what else they might have discussed is not known.³³

3. 1946–48: The Oxford Book of Russian Verse

On February 8, 1946, Costello arrived in London for diplomatic business. While in London, he also visited Oxford where he signed a contract for doing a second edition of *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*, whose first edition, edited by Maurice Baring, had come out in 1924. In his diary, Davin records the event: “A long gap. Paddy came down eventually and we arranged he should do the new edition of OBRV <Oxford Book of Russian Verse>. ~~Then we all went~~ But before that I had been to London and spent a weekend with him at the Savoy” (March 11, 1946, ATL, MSY-3833).

Costello himself recounts the event to his boss McIntosh writing from Moscow on March 7, 1946:

Before I left England I met the Secretary of the Oxford University Press. He has charged me with the job of compiling the supplement to the Oxford Book of Russian Verse, 32 pages of recent poetry which will appear in the next edition of the book; at present they are not considering a totally new revised edition as this would involve expenditure which they cannot now face. He also brought up the question of a book on Russia which he suggested I might write. This latter is not an urgent matter; they’d be willing to wait years for it. I am not thinking of queering my diplomatic pitch by any rush and unauthorized writing, and I am not doing anything about it now; in two or three years it may be worth thinking about. (ATL, MS-Papers-6759-260)

The Secretary of Oxford University Press at the time was Kenneth Sisam (1887–1971), another New Zealand scholar of great distinction.

33 However, Anonymous 1958 reports several undated conversations with Pasternak, some of which could well have taken place in this early period.

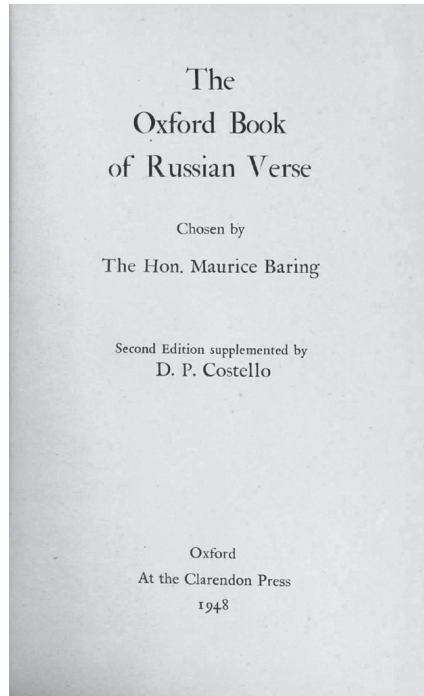


Fig. 1
The Oxford Book of Russian Verse, title page

Whereas the project of a book on Russia never became a reality, Costello completed the supplement quite quickly. He first began by compiling the list of poems/authors that should have been included but keeping the project to himself so as not to be influenced in his decisions. As he reported to Davin on May 17, 1946:

I am not going to send you a formal reply to your letter of 12th of April about the book of verse. That will have to wait until I am rather more advanced with the compilation. In the meantime I am spending most of my leisure very agreeably in reading Russian poetry, and am getting the things which I think good typed off as I find them. Thus I avoid an

accumulation of mechanical waste at the end of the job. In order to keep my own judgment free I am not telling anyone here about this job of mine until I have finished it. Then I will ask the opinion of Boris Pasternak and one or two others whose advice will be useful.

(ATL, MS-Papers-5079-437)

In the same letter, he also mentioned Davin's forthcoming book³⁴ and his plan to try to have it translated into Russian. He said: "I am in touch with Russian writers and I want to show it <your book> to them."

Progress on the supplement was slowed down by the fact that Costello was in Paris from April to September 1946, as part of the New Zealand delegation for the Paris Peace Conference. From Paris he let Davin know that work had stalled but would resume as soon as he got back to Moscow. In the next letter, dated August 26, 1946, he also mentioned Pasternak and Aseev as being "two of the best practitioners of Russian poetry." Definitely an improvement since his judgment on Mikhalkov back in August 1945:

I am writing now, first of all to say that I have to postpone my final work on the Russian anthology until my return to Moscow. I have only a fortnight's more work to do on it, and I want to show what I have collected to two of the best practitioners of Russian poetry, Boris Pasternak and Asyeyev.³⁵ For this I'll have to wait until this Paris show is over.

(ATL, MS-Papers-5079-437)

By November 26, 1946, he was announcing that the work had just about reached completion. This letter is of great interest for Costello's opinions on literature in the Soviet Union and his contacts in the Soviet literary world:

My work on the supplement to the book of Russian verse is practically finished. That is, I have selected all the stuff and written my introduction and notes. The reason why it does not accompany this letter is that there

³⁴ *For the Rest of Our Lives* (1947).

³⁵ Costello included one poem by Nikolai Nikolaevich Aseev in *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*.

are a few facts (dates of birth or deaths and such like minutiae) which I have to fill in and which I can learn only in oral question-and-answer with some of the local literati. I have made the acquaintance of Nikolai Tikhonov, a middling poet and one of the presidents of the Union of Soviet Writers, of another better-than-average poet, Ilya Selvinsky and of a great poet, Boris Pasternak, whom I am seeing again this week. Pasternak is in a peculiar position in this country. He is unquestionably the greatest living Russian poet.³⁶ Moreover, it was by his own choice that he remained in Russia after the Revolution (his father, Leonid P., quite a famous artist in Russia, beat it to England where he died, during the recent war I think³⁷). But Pasternak will not write what or as the Party desires and makes it quite clear that he regards "socialist realism" as a phony doctrine (it is). The current rumour in literary circles here is that, after the blast directed at Akhmatova and Zoshchenko³⁸, Andrei Zhdanov wrote to Pasternak, suggesting a few themes which P. might well treat; Pasternak (this bit is *oratio obliqua*) replied that he was willing to accept Zhdanov's direction in political matters, but that in literary matters he, Pasternak, might perhaps give Zhdanov some advice. This is probably not true, but it is the sort of tale that could be told only of Boris Pasternak; all the other writers either are good Communists or pretend to be. He is therefore a most useful fellow to know, quite apart from the pleasure one feels in the company of a great man. He knew all the literary people since 1910, and he can give me information on writers whose names are never mentioned at all in orthodox circles – Tsvetaeva and Mandelstam

36 Costello will repeat this judgment in *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* (300). Costello included six poems by Pasternak, for a total of six printed pages, in *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*.

37 Leonid Pasternak died in Oxford on May 31, 1945.

38 Following a resolution by the Party Central Committee (dated August 14, 1946) attacking the journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* for publishing material hostile to the interests of the Soviet Union, Andrei Zhdanov, the Secretary for Ideology, delivered speeches viciously attacking the two writers who had been the main targets of the resolution, namely Anna Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoshchenko. This marked the beginning of the policy of cultural repression known under the name of 'Zhdanovism' which paralyzed Soviet literature until Stalin's death in 1953 and beyond.

for example – because they died outside the Church. Pasternak and a few other people I know will fill in the little gaps in my typescript, and then I'll bring it straight off to you.

(ATL, MS-Papers-5079-437)

Whatever can be said about Costello's sympathetic attitude to Soviet communism, it is clear that he was an independent-minded observer. Calling "socialist realism" a phony doctrine can hardly be counted as a trait of a faithful party-liner.

We have seen that on November 26, 1946, Costello had announced to Davin that his work on the second edition of *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* was practically finished. Towards the end of the year or at the very beginning of 1947, Costello sent the work to Davin. But more needed to be done:

January 10, 1947

By now you will have received the stuff for the book of Russian verse and I hope it looks satisfactory. For myself, when I look through it and compare it with Baring's first edition, I confess I feel quite complacent; it seems to me that this supplement, or whatever one calls it, doubles the value of the book. This may merely be vanity, but it is more like me when I have done anything to consider it with a sort of despair and a conviction that it is utterly worthless, why ever did I attempt it, etc. etc. This time however, no such thing. The job looks well enough to me.

When will the proofs of your novel be ready? You did hope to have them by last August, I remember. If they are not available even yet it would seem that there in the world even worse delayers than I; I thought I was bad enough. My work on the Russian poems gave me the acquaintance of a number of Russian writers, many of whom know English, and it will be easy for me, once I have read the novel myself, to get the opinion of a good judge as to whether it will be politically desirable to put out a Russian translation.

(ATL, MS-Papers-5079-437)

Costello returns to his connection to Russian writers in reply to the arrival of Davin's novel *For the Rest of Our Lives* (1947). The novel was brought to Mos-

cow by Ruth Lake.³⁹ On January 23, 1947, Costello acknowledged receipt of the book and proposed to consult Pasternak on whether it could be published in the USSR: "I shall get Pasternak or someone to give me an opinion on the possibilities of publication here. For myself, I am not sure" (ATL, MS-Papers-5079-437).

Meanwhile Costello wrote to McIntosh on January 27, 1947:

Some time back I finished my spare time job of preparing the second edition of the Oxford Book of Russian Verse, and expect soon to be proof-reading, an unpleasant enough job even when the language is one's own. The Oxford people have again mentioned the possibility of my producing for them a book on Russia, not a "Moscow 1947" or a "Russia Faces the Future," but a reasonably scholarly account of the country from the beginnings, on the lines of the book on America which they published during the war. I have done nothing about it so far, and indeed am not well enough equipped to write such a book. The first couple of years in Moscow are spent in mastering the language, settling in [...] and getting blooded in Russian music and drama. In a word, this is a strange world and takes time getting used to. One can begin to talk sense about it only when the strangeness has worn off. Now I believe I am beginning to know a little about Russia, and in a year, perhaps two, may be able – subject to the various censorship – to write something useful about it.
(ATL, MS-Papers-6759-260)

39 Ruth Lake (died 1991), née Macky, was employed at the New Zealand Legation in Moscow. There she met Douglas Lake (died 1995), who also worked at the Legation. They married in Ireland in 1946. At the beginning of their stay in Moscow (1944) Ruth Lake was employed as a "shorthand typist-cyber person" and Douglas was a sort of factotum. By 1946 each was appointed "Third Secretary" (Templeton 1989: 18–19). They left Moscow for good in December 1948. The collection of Douglas Lake's letters to his family in 1944–1945, preserved at ATL, Wellington, is a wonderful source of information about life in the New Zealand Legation in its first two years. See the reference under ATL in the archival section.

The next letter to Davin details consultations with Pasternak concerning a variety of matters related to *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*. In this letter we read about Pasternak's request for a number of English books:

About Mayakovsky's lines.⁴⁰ I saw Boris Pasternak two evenings ago and had him confirm his opinion on the advisability of printing M. in straight lines. He is perfectly prepared to be quoted to this effect. I, however, am reluctant to mention Pasternak, for the reason that he is the object of criticism (political, not literary, although it is made by the Writers' Union) just now and I rather feel that it would not make his position any easier if he were quoted as approving a book which might well be attacked here (I have tried to sound utterly unbiassed in my introduction and notes, but common honesty made me say a number of things which the Russians may resent). Therefore, I still would prefer to say no more about the manner of printing Mayakovsky than I have already said in the notes. If, however, you feel strongly that I should endeavour to disarm criticism by naming my authorities, then I concoct an extra sentence or two to be inserted in the notes at the appropriate place, and will add Tikhonov's name to give Pasternak cover. Once again, I'd rather leave the thing as it stands, for Pasternak's sake. Don't misunderstand me. Pasternak would not be shot or exiled, in the way in which the Daily Herald disposes of Russians who fall into official disfavour. But, thanks to the ineptitude of the head of the Writers' Union here Fadyeyev, he lives in a sort of little vacuum of his own among the writers, and I do not want to do anything to increase his isolation.

In conclusion, Pasternak asked me to get him some English books. I do not want, on the strength of a little job like that which I have done, to become a pensioner of the Oxford Press, and would like you, please, to send along with the books, a bill made out to me. The books he mentioned were: anything of Jane Austen, Fielding, Smollett, Congreve and (on my advice) Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, which you may remember I have also asked for for myself. If any of them are still in print in the World's

40 Costello published five long poems by Mayakovsky in *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* (see 246–257).

Classics they would be gratefully received. He is particularly keen to read Jane Austen.⁴¹

Yours sincerely, D. P. Costello

(Extract from letter of 7th February 1947, remainder in PKT. 121; OP 702/4936)

Despite the fact that *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* was just about done in early 1947, it did not appear until late 1948. As we saw, Costello was very pleased at the outcome. The "Editor's note to the second edition" is dated "December 6, 1946." It is five pages long and Costello did his best to give a balanced account of the current state of poetry in the USSR. But his selection could hardly have pleased the Soviets. In his approximately 50 page supplement he included poems by Gumilev, Pasternak, Mandelshtam, Tsvetaeva and Akhmatova. Of Pasternak he said: "He is universally recognized as the

41 The documents in the OUP archive (OP 702/4936) indicate that Davin had made a request for copies of these books. Whether they were sent and reached Pasternak is not known. Neither *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* nor any of the books mentioned in the letter (Austen etc.) are listed in the list of books held in Pasternak's library in Peredelkino that was drawn in 1963 by Pasternak's daughter in law, Elena Vladimirovna Pasternak. It is possible that all these books were lent or lost between 1948 and 1963 but it is also possible that they never reached Pasternak. I thank Anna Koznova for the having checked the list of holdings of Pasternak's library. It is however certain that Pasternak saw *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*. On August 7, 1949 he wrote to his cousin, Olga Freidenberg, the following: "I was shown the *Oxford Book of Russian Verse* (second edition) with Russian texts and Bowra's translations, and Bowra's book on Apollinaire, Mayakovsky, myself, Eliot, and the Spanish poet Lorca. In anthologies published abroad, Pushkin, Blok, and I are accorded more space than anyone else (I blush to say it). It becomes clear from notes and introductions that collections of my poetry in translation (these alone are mentioned) have passed muster on the market. They must have, if another publisher is putting them out in a new translation. And they speak not of 'the best' or 'the foremost' Soviet poet or anything of the kind, but of Boris Pasternak without any epithet, as though the name meant something in itself, as, for instance, we once published Verlaine or Verhaeren without any epithet" (Pasternak 1982: 293). The editors of Pasternak 2004a (see Vol. IX, note 6: 576) consider this passage to refer to Bowra 1948 and Bowra 1949. In my opinion, Pasternak is listing three things, namely *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* (second edition) edited by Costello, Bowra 1948 and Bowra 1949.

greatest living Russian poet" (300). He also added "At present he is engaged on a novel" (see next section). Not surprisingly, *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* was attacked by the Communist press in the West. It is not part of my brief to reconstruct those attacks, or the reception of the book in the Soviet Union, but I will use this opportunity to alert Costello scholars of an importance source that has hitherto remained unnoticed by them. I am referring to the letters from Moscow by Franco Venturi⁴², edited by his son Antonello Venturi in the beautiful volume "Franco Venturi e la Russia" (Venturi 2006). Venturi and Costello had become very good friends in Moscow after Venturi arrived in 1947 and their friendship remained alive after both of them left Moscow.⁴³ Venturi mentions Costello in several letters giving us a vivid portrait of Costello's intellectual interests.⁴⁴ I want to highlight in

42 Franco Venturi (1914–1994) was an Italian historian who specialized in the history of the Enlightenment and of Russia. He was cultural attaché of the Italian Embassy in Moscow between 1947 and 1951.

43 The Archivio privato Franco Venturi in Turin has three letters from Costello to Venturi from the 1950s (one in English, one in French, and one in Italian). I thank Antonello Venturi for his help in my investigations concerning the relationship between Venturi and Costello.

44 On September 18, 1947, Venturi writes to Ada Gobetti: "E del resto ogni tanto anche in questo mondo diplomatico si trova della gente molto interessante. C'è per esempio un irlandese di origine spagnola la cui famiglia è da generazioni in Nuova Zelanda, che parla uno splendido italiano, un ancor più brillante russo e legge con gusto le poesie di Campanella e che ha curato l'edizione di Oxford dei versi russi contemporanei. Pensa che conosce così bene l'Italia da aver letto i libri di Lussu, e con tutto questo non ha nulla del poliglotta e giudica delle cose di qui in modo molto interessante" (Venturi 2006: 68). ("And after all, every now and then even in this diplomatic world one can find very interesting people. There is for instance an Irishman of Spanish origin whose family has been for generations in New Zealand. He speaks an excellent Italian, an even more brilliant Russian, he reads with pleasure Campanella's poems, and has edited the Russian edition of contemporary Russian verses. Just think that he knows Italy so well that he has read Lussu's books and despite all this he has nothing of the polyglot and judges the events here in a very interesting way"). And to Alessandro Galante Garrone on January 10, 1948: "Non solo abbiamo conosciuto qui Paddy Costello, ma è anche la persona più simpatica che abbiamo trovato tra gli stranieri moscovizzati. Si interessa veramente delle nostre cose ed è una persona sul serio intelligente. Abbiamo fatto buona amicizia e ci vediamo spesso. Parla un italiano perfetto con ogni tanto delle tipiche parole

particular a letter to Giulio Einaudi, the famous Italian publisher, in which Venturi, on September 25, 1947, informs Einaudi that Costello was interested in translating Gramsci's letters into English.⁴⁵ Nothing came of the project

del '500, aggiungendo che è naturale le adoperi dato che sta leggendo Guicciardini. È uno dei pochi stranieri qui che si interessino veramente di questo paese (tra l'altro parla ammirevolmente il russo). Fa veramente piacere incontrarlo, e solleva dall'impressione piuttosto sconsolante che lasciano gli stranieri diplomatici abituali qui" (Venturi 2006: 89). ("We have not only met here Paddy Costello but he is also the nicest person that we have found among the foreigners living in Moscow. He takes a genuine interest in our things and he is a truly intelligent person. We have become good friends and we see each other often. His spoken Italian is perfect with the use of some typical words from the sixteenth century; a natural thing, one should add, since he is reading Guicciardini. He is one of the few foreigners here truly interested in the affairs of this country (among other things he speaks Russian admirably). It is a real pleasure to meet him and one feels uplifted from the otherwise discouraging impression one gets from the typical foreign diplomats found here").

- 45 "I have met here the New-Zealand counselor Costello, who knows Italian literature deeply and who speaks our language very well. He is very intelligent and greatly sympathizes with contemporary Russia. I gave him 'Gramsci's Letters' and he is enthusiastic about them. He studied in Cambridge and knows quite well the publishing and intellectual circles in England. He has recently published for Oxford University Press an anthology with commentary of contemporary Soviet poets, which is very well done. He asked me to let him know if Gramsci's letters are already being translated in England. If not he would be very happy to be able to do the English translation. No doubt he could find a distinguished publisher for this book, in exquisite format, among one of the great University Publishing Houses in England. Thus, if you have not taken previous engagements, do please consider this offer with the greatest attention. From the political point of view, given Costello's personal position, there would be no hindrances and from the financial point of view there would be no obstacles on account of his diplomatic position. Please write directly to me in regard to this matter and I will let him know your decisions." ("Ho fatto conoscenza qui con il consigliere neo-zelandese Costello, vero conoscitore della letteratura italiana che parla molto bene la nostra lingua, molto intelligente, profondamente simpatizzante con la Russia attuale. Gli ho passato le 'Lettere di Gramsci' e ne è entusiasta. Ha fatto tutti i suoi studi a Cambridge e conosce molto bene tutti gli ambienti editoriali ed intellettuali dell'Inghilterra. Ha recentemente pubblicato nella Oxford University Press una antologia dei poeti sovietici commentata e fatta molto bene. Mi ha chiesto di sapere se già si stanno traducendo in Inghilterra le lettere di Gramsci. In caso contrario sarebbe felice di poter far lui la

but Venturi pointed out that from a political point of view, given Costello's political leanings, there would be no difficulty in assigning him the task and that he had done an excellent job with the recent collection of Russian poems published by Oxford University Press. Venturi was obviously *au courant* of *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* although he was mistaken in thinking that it had already appeared, for the book would not appear until late 1948. But in connection to *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*, the most interesting passage is from a letter to Felice Balbo dated January 23, 1950, where Venturi refers to a negative review of *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* by the Communist Italian monthly *Rinascita* whose editor was Palmiro Togliatti, secretary of the Italian Communist Party. In the letter he asked Balbo to send him two copies of Renato Poggioli's *Il Fiore del Verso Russo* (Einaudi 1949). One copy he needed for himself and the second copy was for Costello, whose *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* was referenced by Poggioli:

I have the intention to give a copy as a present to Costello, whose name appears in the book. He is the reactionary New Zealander mentioned in *Rinascita* and who, I am not sure whether the editors of *Rinascita* are aware of this, is a communist. He is the representative of New Zealand in Moscow, a very intelligent and nice man. If he likes Pasternak, it is not his fault and neither is the fact that he does not believe that Tvardovsky is the greatest modern poet. Costello speaks Italian very well and will definitely be interested in Poggioli.

Ho l'intenzione di regalarne una copia al Costello di cui si parla nel libro, il neozelandese reazionario di *Rinascita*, che, non so se lo sappiano i re-

traduzione in inglese. Certo lui avrebbe il modo di trovare un editore degno per questo libro in Inghilterra ed immagino che avrebbe tutti i legami necessari per farlo pubblicare ad esempio da una delle grandi case editrici universitarie inglesi, in splendida veste. Se perciò non hai preso nessun altro impegno, ti prego di considerare questa offerta con la massima attenzione. Dal punto di vista politico non ci sarebbero difficoltà data la posizione personale di Costello, e dal punto di vista finanziario immagino che non ci sarebbero ostacoli data la sua posizione diplomatica. Scrivimi direttamente a me <sic> in proposito, ed io gli comunicherò le tue decisioni." – Venturi 2006: 72).

dattori di Rinascita, è comunista, rappresentante della Nuova Zelanda a Mosca e uomo molto intelligente e simpatico. Se gli piace Pasternak non è colpa sua e se non crede che Tvardovskij sia il più grande poeta moderno, neppure. Costello parla l'italiano benissimo e certo si interesserà moltissimo a Poggioli.⁴⁶

"If he likes Pasternak, it is not his fault." But Costello's love for Pasternak related to his poetry and, as we will discover in the next section, did not extend to *Doctor Zhivago*.

4. Pasternak asks Costello to translate *Doctor Zhivago*

We have so far recorded the contacts between Pasternak and Costello in 1946–1948 with special attention to Costello's work on *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*. But in 1947 something else of great relevance happened. At some point before June, Pasternak asked Costello to translate the first part of *Doctor Zhivago*. Regrettably, we don't have the entire letter from Costello to Davin where Costello informs his friend of this development. But we have the crucial passage from the reply. On June 27, 1947 Davin wrote to Costello: "About Pasternak, by the way; I suppose any English publisher would jump at your translation of his novel but if it's dispo[n]ible you might let me know. It's just possible OUP here would do it."⁴⁷ This information is surely evidence that the relation between Costello and Pasternak had changed. Even if one grants the full veracity of Berlin's report as to Pasternak's annoyed reaction to Costello in 1945, surely having asked him to translate *Doctor Zhivago* is strong evidence of a significantly modified attitude.

⁴⁶ Venturi 2006: 127.

⁴⁷ This excerpt from Davin's letter to Costello is found in McNeish's research notes for his book *The Sixth Man* (folder "Pasternak"). In the book McNeish only cites the passage "would jump at your translation" (see 293 and note 383). McNeish indicates that the original letter is "ex Katie Costello archive." I thank Phillip Green and Barbara Figgess for their help in connection to McNeish's research folders for *The Sixth Man*.

Why didn't Costello translate the work that Pasternak considered the most important he had ever achieved in his life? We don't have his reaction from the time of the event (which was perhaps contained in the lost letter to Davin). However, we have a very important letter from Costello, written in 1958, which explains why he declined Pasternak's offer. It is a letter to James Bertram⁴⁸ intended as a reply to Charles Brasch, editor of *Landfall*, who had asked Costello to review *Doctor Zhivago* for *Landfall*. This letter was cited by McNeish and others but never presented fully. As it is very revealing of Costello's attitude to Pasternak and *Doctor Zhivago*, I reproduce it in its entirety:

21 Rathen Road
Withington
Manchester 20
18 September 1958

Dear Jim,

The immediate occasion of this note is that I owe a letter to Charles Brasch but, having lost his letter to me, have no record of his address. I wonder if you'd mind telling him from me that I must regretfully decline to review *Doctor Zhivago* for *Landfall*? The reason is that I think it is a bad novel and that I do not wish to say this at length in public, (a) because I like Pasternak personally and love his poetry, (b) because the reason for my disapproval of the book could easily be misunderstood.

Before I read Max Hayward's⁴⁹ translation, which I have just done, I felt certain misgivings, for the following reason. About ten years ago, when

48 James Bertram (1910–1993), New Zealand writer, journalist and academic.

49 Max Hayward (1924–1979) was a Russian scholar and translator. In 1956, he joined St Antony's College at Oxford, where he remained until the end of his life. Costello knew Hayward well. They overlapped in Moscow in 1947–1949. Hayward, according to his own testimony, only saw Pasternak on February 6, 1948, at an evening of poetry (see note 59). This is quite surprising if one realizes that before going to Moscow, Hayward had rented a room in the house of Lydia Pasternak Slater. What remains of the contacts between Costello and Hayward in the 1940s is a long letter written by Costello to Hayward found in the Max Hayward papers as St Antony's

I used to call on Pasternak, he gave me the first part of *Zhivago* in typescript, with the idea that I might care to translate it. I read it and decided that it was not the sort of book I wanted to devote my leisure to. During the last year, since Feltrinelli published the Italian version⁵⁰, there has been a swelling chorus in praise of the book, first in Italy, then in France, now here. Pasternak has become the object of a cult among literary snobs (most of whom are unacquainted with his poetry, which is magnificent). Some of the dull fellows who review the book have, inevitably I suppose, compared *Zhivago* to *War and Peace* (holy Christ!). So when, after a lapse of ten years, I took up the book again, this time in Hayward's excellent translation, I wondered had I been wrong then? Was this a masterpiece which, if I had not been blind, I might have recognized and had the honor of presenting to the English public?

I've just finished the book and my misgivings have vanished. This is no new *War and Peace*. It is even not in the same class as *The Quiet Don* or the best of Leonov. First and worst, it contains no characters. There is only the author and his opinions – and the landscape. Too much bloody landscape. This itch to fix the shifting aspects of the passing world in perfectly contrived patterns of right words is to me a disease of XXth century literature. Fowler had something to say about the beginning of it in Kipling. Russian literature went through this malady before we did, and Tolstoy in his later years reproached himself for succumbing to it in his masterpieces; Chekhov depicts a case of it in *The Seagull*. Again and again I feel like bawling, 'Stop showing how clever you are. Keep to the bloody story.'

And what is the story? The story of a man who contracts out of the history of his country. Solon, I seem to remember, ordained that those who stood aside from the broils of Athens should be punished. I don't advocate punishment for such; but I must say that my respect goes to Gumilyov (who was shot by the Reds) and to Mayakovsky (who wore himself out in the

College, Oxford. A copy of same letter is also found in the Davin papers at ATL. Costello had put Hayward and Davin in contact. Max Hayward is also warmly thanked for his help on the notes of Costello's edition of Gribboedov's *Gore ot uma* (1951).

50 On Feltrinelli's publication of *Doctor Zhivago* see Mancosu 2013 and 2016.

service of the revolution), rather than to the neutrals. This is a personal preference, and I should not have mentioned it were it not for the complacency with which Pasternak describes himself. Indeed I found the vanity of the author disconcerting.

The trouble is that if ever the book is reviewed inside the Soviet Union it will be by some hack whose judgments are predictable and who will therefore convince nobody. Pasternak will become the object of a cult, simply because intelligent youth there are sick of death of Party handouts and paternalism. I wish the Russian authorities would authorize publication in Russia and permit free discussion of the book's merits and faults. Then it would find its proper place in Russian literature, which, as things are, it cannot do.

I have written as though I thought the book was just bad. That is only because of the extravagant praise it has received here. There are passionately interesting things in it – this is the first completely unofficial account of Soviet life that we have had. And the descriptive detail, usually irrelevant, is often miraculously executed. Moreover, I have nothing but respect for Pasternak's courage in writing the book and in publishing it abroad, despite all pressure (you probably know about the ignominious tricks to which the Soviet authorities resorted in order to prevent Feltrinelli from publishing the Italian version). But I don't think it's a masterpiece.

I attended the World Congress of Slavists in Moscow earlier this month.⁵¹ Pasternak was out of town, else I should have called on him and talked about the book.

Yours ever,
Paddy Costello
(ATL, 93-133-29)

51 Costello mentions here his attendance to the World Congress of Slavists in Moscow in August 1958. He announced to Davin his intention to go to Moscow in a letter dated August 19, 1958 written from Manchester: "I think that I am going to Russia after all. Towards the end of July I received a personal invitation from the organizers of the Congress, who will be shouting (*novozelandicè*). Manchester University will pay my fare. So I feel I might as well go if only to see how the old town is looking after eight years. I suppose Konovalov will be conveying the Oxford salaams to

Costello is not alone among Slavic scholars to have expressed “love” for Pasternak’s poetry but distaste for his novel. Among Pasternak’s friends, Fedeci⁵² and Ripellino⁵³ took the same position (see Mancosu 2016).⁵⁴ And it must be granted that Costello well saw that the political context in which Pasternak’s publication took place was not favorable to a dispassionate analysis of the book and of its literary merits or lack thereof. He himself did not want to contribute to the public discussion but eventually relented. In 1959 he wrote an essay on *Doctor Zhivago*. He submitted it to several journals but it was rejected (see McNeish 2007: 293). It was delivered as a lecture in 1963 at Birmingham University and published posthumously as Costello 1964. In essence it develops, with even greater vigor, the points already made in the letter to Bertram.

In conclusion to this section, I would like to mention another claim that has been made concerning the relation between Pasternak and Costello. It is

Pasternak. If anyone wanted to send a message I’d be happy to carry it, but, as I say, I don’t imagine my services will be required” (ATL, MS-Papers-5079-437). McNeish reports an interview with Reginald Christian who was with Costello at the time and confirmed that there was no encounter with Pasternak (see McNeish 2007: 292).

- 52 Ziemowit Fedeci (1923–2009) was a Polish writer. For his role in the *Zhivago* saga see Mancosu 2016.
- 53 Angelo Maria Ripellino (1923–1978) was the editor of an important collection of Russian poetry (Ripellino 1954), which Pasternak received in July 1956 and praised in a letter to Ripellino himself dated July 29, 1956 (Ripellino/Pasternak 1980: 317; see also Ripellino 1979 and Pasternak 2005). Ripellino also edited a very important collection of Pasternak’s poems (original Russian with facing Italian translation), published by Einaudi in 1957.
- 54 I hasten to add that Costello’s admiration for Pasternak’s poetry never waned. At the beginning of Anonymous 1958 Pasternak is described as “the greatest living Russian poet” (86) and at the end of the 1964 paper we read: “After the novel, the poems. The impact of the very first of the batch, *Hamlet*, is as though a great singer, who in the course of a long conversation had been busy revealing all the traditional shortcomings of the tenor – vanity, silliness, envy, but, above all, vanity – suddenly were to lift up his voice, clear and pure, in song. Pasternak’s lyrical gift lost nothing over the fifty years of his literary career. The *Zhivago* poems remind us that he was not merely a poet without a rival in Russian literature since the death of Mandelstam; he is one of the great Russian poets. They remind us, too, that the talents of the novelist and of the lyric poet tend to exclude each other” (Costello 1964: 80).

found in a lecture by James Bertram delivered in 1981 at his Victoria University graduation address in Wellington. As quoted by Rita Ricketts (2018: 17), who does not provide information as to where the text of the lecture is to be found, Bertram said that his mastery of Russian “led him to be an intimate, not as in a Le Carre film of the RIS <Russian intelligence service>, but of Boris Pasternak, whom he helped to complete his much admired Russian translation of some of Shakespeare’s greatest tragedies.”⁵⁵ Since Pasternak was still involved in translations of Shakespeare’s works in the period 1945–1950, this cannot be excluded.⁵⁶ For instance on October 1, 1948 he wrote to Olga Freidenberg⁵⁷: “At that time <summer 1947> I was finishing the first book of my novel in prose and at the same time editing and re-editing seven of my translations of Shakespeare’s plays according to the wishes of countless editors sitting in various publishing houses.” (Pasternak 1982: 276)

55 A very similar claim is found in a letter from Bertram to Davin dated August 3, 1981. The letter from Bertram to Davin is found at the ATL in MS-Papers-5079-426. In it we read: “[...] and <Costello> deserved to be remembered for his outstanding services to his country and to literature (Pasternak Shaks translatsns, Oxford Bk of Russn Verse, etc.” Thanks to the efforts of Robin Munro and Linda McGregor I was able to locate the relevant part of Bertram’s Victoria University graduation address delivered at the Wellington Town Hall. It is found in the Michael King Papers at ATL in a folder titled “Proposed book on Security Intelligence Service – Research material” under call number ATL, MS-8752-206. The document is titled “EXTRACT from Graduation Address by James Bertram, Wellington Town Hall, 29 April 1981.” The original text of the lecture differs from that reported in Ricketts’ article in the form of a quote from the lecture. The part on Pasternak reads as follows: “Here he <Costello> became intimate, not (as in a le Carré film scenario) with any member of the Soviet security forces, but with the leading Russian poet and dissident Boris Pasternak, whom he helped to complete his admired Russian translations of some of Shakespeare’s greatest tragedies.” Regrettably, Bertram does not give an further explanation on what grounds he based his claim.

56 Pamela Davidson gives the following dates for Pasternak’s translations of Shakespeare: “In 1939 he translated *Hamlet* (published in 1940), in 1941–1942 *Romeo and Juliet* (1943), in 1943 *Antony and Cleopatra* (1944), in 1944 *Othello* (1945), in 1945–1946 *Henry IV*, parts 1 and 2 (1948), and in 1946–1947 *King Lear* (1949). His translation of *Macbeth* was carried out later in 1950 and published in 1951” (Davidson 2007: 80).

57 Olga Freidenberg (1890–1955) was Boris’ cousin. See her correspondence with Boris Pasternak in Pasternak 1982.

However, Bertram is the only person who claims that Costello helped Pasternak in his Shakespeare translations and I was not able to locate any other sources supporting this claim.⁵⁸ I think it is better to remain agnostic until further evidence is discovered.

5. 1948 and after: Costello as courier

The first appearance of Pasternak in the Costello correspondence with Davin for the year 1948 is a report of an evening in February 1948 during which Pasternak read his poetry with an enthusiastic reception by the audience. On February 19, 1948, Costello wrote:

Another bit of good news is that Boris Pasternak, who has been out of the limelight since the 1946 ukaze on literature, was one of some twenty poets who declaimed their own work at a concert held on the twelfth of this month in the best concert hall of the city. The applause given to him was louder and longer than that given to anyone else, which pleased me. (ATL, MS-Papers-5079-437)

This poetry recital is well known to Pasternak scholars. However, there is some confusion in the scholarly literature, which this letter helps us sort out.

The essence of the potential confusion is that there were two evenings with the same program ("An evening of poetry on the Theme: 'Down with the Warmongers! For a lasting peace of people's democracy'"). As reported in *Literaturnaia Gazeta* of February 14, 1948, the two events took place at the Polytechnic and in the Hall of Columns. No dates are specified in the article. Costello's letter is the only piece of information I have found concerning the precise date and location of second event: February 12, 1948 at the Hall of Columns. The first event then took place at the Polytechnic Museum. The poster for the event at the Polytechnic Museum is reproduced in Pasternak 1988: 593. The event is described extensively by Max Hayward (1983: 204–207,

⁵⁸ Costello is not mentioned in Katsis 2015, an extended study of Pasternak's connections with his English contacts that focuses on his Shakespeare translations.

see also Gladkov 1977: 20–24), and by Mikhail Polivanov (1993: 949–496) and Pasternak (2004a, Vol. XI: 459–463). The confusion in the literature seem to arise from pairing the right date for the first event (February 6) with the wrong place (the Hall of Columns as opposed to the Polytechnic). This is evident in the commentary to Polivanov's remembrances found in Pasternak 2004 (see Vol. XI, note 5: 810; this misleading commentary is not found in Polivanov 1993: 741–742). In addition, the commentary to Polivanov dates the event at the Polytechnic Museum on February 23 and the *later* event at the Hall of Columns on February 6! Several scholars have used the wrong date of February 23. In any case, E. Pasternak has it right in the new edition of Pasternak's biography (1997: 627) where he indicates the meeting on February 6 as taking place at the Polytechnic Museum. Barnes (1998: 251–52 and footnote 74: 419) correctly placed the first event on February 6 at the Polytechnic Museum and the second, but without specifying a date, at the Hall of Columns. What this means is that Hayward and Costello saw the program on different nights, Hayward on the 6th and Costello on the 12th.

The first event, described in detail by Hayward and Polivanov (see also Barnes 1998: 251–52), has remained memorable for the interruption of Surkov's recital when Pasternak arrived on the stage accompanied by thunderous applause from the audience. It is also recounted in a letter from Franco Venturi to Emilio Castellani dated March 3, 1948:

Come esempio della differenza di mentalità, recentemente, in una serata di poeti, in cui tutti i principali scrittori diversi dell'Urss leggevano una loro poesia, o meglio la gridavano perchè la sala era molto grande, uno dei più tipici poeti ufficiali, Surikov <sic for Surkov>, ha dovuto per 5 minuti interrompere la lettura di un suo poema patriottico, perchè in quel momento era entrato Boris Pasternak, anch'egli considerato come estraneo al popolo sovietico, e ciò non di meno ammesso alle serate dei poeti, accolto dal pubblico con frenetici applausi.

(Archivio privato Franco Venturi, Turin; I thank Antonello Venturi for having sent me this letter and for permission to publish the excerpt.)

As example of the difference in mentality, recently – in an evening of poetry reading in which all the main diverse writers of the USSR read

one of their poems, or better were screaming because the room was very big – one of the most typical official poets, Surikov <sic for Surkov>, was forced to stop his reading because just at that moment Boris Pasternak had entered the room. And despite the fact that Pasternak is considered as foreign to the Soviet people, and yet admitted to the evening readings of poetry, he was received from the audience with frenetic applause.

With that information in place, we can now clarify what Anonymous 1958 (90) reveals of Costello's attendance to Pasternak recitals:

Twice before the Zhdanov manifesto <August 1946> and once after it I heard Pasternak recite in public and, on the basis of his reception, was able to form an idea of his popularity with the literate public. Two of the recitals were combined operations, involving a dozen or more poets, each of whom recited only one or two poems. Both times Pasternak was acclaimed longer and more loudly than anyone else; the runner-up on the earlier occasion was Anna Akhmatova; on the second, the chairman vainly tried, in defiance of the unceasing applause, to prevent Pasternak from giving an encore. More interesting was the one-man recital he gave in the large theatre of the Polytechnical Museum. The place was packed, some people sitting in the gangways. Pasternak had a triumphal reception. After the conclusion of each piece people from all parts of the hall would shout out the names of their favourites in much the same way as a popular tenor is urged to render this, that or the other Neapolitan song or snippet of opera. When someone raised the cry 'Sixty-sixth sonnet,' others took it up until it seemed the whole audience was chanting 'Shi-disyat shistoi sonet!' And Pasternak 'obliged' with his superb translation of Shakespeare's 'Tired with all these for restful death I cry ...' Another thing I remember from that evening is that when, as happened once or twice, he forgot his lines and stood at a loss, there were many people to prompt him from memory, calling out the next line from their places.⁵⁹

59 Notice that the Surkov detail is not to be found in this account, another indication that Costello went to the recital on February 12 at the Hall of Columns. The other two (pre-Zhdanov) events seem to have been the following: a recital in the Hall of

In a letter to Davin dated April 8, 1948, we find traces of contacts between Pasternak and Costello on the very delicate issue of Mandelshtam's death.⁶⁰ Apparently Davin had asked about the reliability of the source for Costello's claim regarding the time and place of Mandelshtam's death:

Dear Dan,

Your letter of 1 April arrived yesterday. About Mandelstam's death: Mandelstam was arrested in 1937 during the great purge. To my knowledge no official account of his fate has ever been published. Towards the end of 1946 I enquired of the Union of Soviet Writers what had happened to him, and was told that "the USW has no information on the subject."

Gleb Struve, in a footnote to the French edition of his *History of Soviet Russian Literature* (1946, I think) says that "it is believed that" Mandelstam died in 1942. But his authority is an émigré paper, not a Soviet source. I was not content with this and asked Pasternak if he knew anything about it. Pasternak said that he was sure M. had died long before 1942, but he could not say just when. He was, however, seeing M.'s widow⁶¹ during the next week or so, and he would ask her the exact date. Some time later P. rang me up to tell me what I wanted: Mandelstam died of some disease or other in the hospital at Vladivostock in December 1938. My authority is therefore Mandelstam's widow at one remove.

I shouldn't like to say all this publicly: the Soviet authorities would take a pale view of P.'s action in passing on to a foreign diplomat information on

Columns on April 2, 1946, where Akhmatova, Pasternak, and other Leningrad and Moscow poets read their work (see Barnes 1998: 228) and a solo recital by Pasternak at the Polytechnic Museum on May 27, 1946 (see Barnes 1998: 229). While I tried to be accurate I still take this reconstruction to be tentative as I have a feeling that in his description, which was written more than ten years after the events, Costello might have mixed up details of different performances.

60 A short biographical note on Mandelshtam is given in *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* (300). Costello included four poems by Mandelshtam in *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*.

61 Nadezhda Mandelshtam, author of two well-known books, *Hope Against Hope. A Memoir* and *Hope Abandoned*.

so embarrassing a subject. Show it to Mrs. Holdsworth⁶², however: I think she'll agree that we are unlikely to get more authoritative information on the subject, at any rate for a long time.

(OP 702/4936)

From this point on, we don't hear about Pasternak in Costello's letters to Davin (at least those preserved at the ATL in Wellington) until 1953. But this lack of information is not indicative of lack of action.

Costello has been credited with having served as courier for Pasternak on several occasions. Some of these attributions are quite weak; others, while correct, can be much more solidly established. In addition, there are other events in which Costello acted as courier that have escaped scholarly notice. There are two types of events to consider, namely those in which he was personally in England and those about which we know that he arranged deliveries of letters/typescripts directly from Moscow.

A study of Costello's stay in Moscow and of his trips abroad shows that between August 1944, when he arrived in Moscow, and June 1950, when he closed down the New Zealand Legation in Moscow and left the USSR, Costello went to England on the following dates: February–March 1946; October 1948; June–July 1950.

We saw that in 1980 Davin, writing to Isaiah Berlin, had some rather vague memories concerning what Costello might have brought and when:

Moreover, these particular talks between you and Pasternak seem to have been in 1946 (I've not the copy beside me and so have not checked). But, when Costello visited us (visited with as the Americans say) in 1947 or 1948 he brought with him recent messages from Pasternak to his sister,

62 Mary Holdsworth was from 1947 to 1962 Senior Research Officer at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of Oxford. In 1962 she became the Principal of St. Mary's College at University of Durham and Hon. Lecturer in the Department of Politics at the University of Durham, where she lectured on Soviet Institutions. It remains unclear how Mary Holdsworth was connected to *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse*.

and I seem to remember, some MSS of Pasternak's – poems perhaps or parts of Dr. Z – which I think he was to pass on to Bowra.
(MS Berlin 214 fol, 221-1)

Berlin was skeptical that any parts of *Doctor Zhivago* might have gone to Bowra: "All I think he sent to Bowra was a letter and a signed copy of his published poems – certainly nothing from Zhivago, which Maurice knew nothing about at the time" (ATL, MS-Papers-5079-426).

Notice also that Berlin does not say that what Bowra received was brought to him by Costello.

We will come back soon to the year 1948. But first we need to discuss Costello's visit in February–March 1946, when the meeting that sealed the project for the new edition of *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* took place.

February–March 1946

Did Costello bring anything at that stage? Neither Davin's diary nor Lydia Pasternak's diary provide any information in this regard. One has to keep in mind that Berlin had come back from the USSR in January 1946 bringing a very long letter by Pasternak for his sisters. Thus, there would have been little need to send more in February. Indeed, there are no letters from Pasternak to his relatives in Oxford until June 26, 1946, and on that occasion it was Anna Holdcroft⁶³, who worked at the British Embassy in Moscow, who acted as courier. In any case, there have been no claims attributing to Costello the delivery of anything coming from Pasternak in February–March 1946, and nothing I have seen suggests that he did. Indeed, when discussing Costello's visit in October 1948 we will be able to prove that it was on that occasion that he met Pasternak's sisters for the first time.

63 Anna (Annie) Holdcroft (1894–1987). She worked in Moscow from November 1944 to December 1948, first in the British Ministry of Information and then for the British Foreign Office. On Holdcroft and her connection to Pasternak and Berlin see Davidson 2009b (note 9: 76–78) and Fleishman 2013. Even in this case, as in the case of Berlin, one would have expected some contacts between Holdcroft and Costello, but I found no document indicating that they met.

April 1948

The situation is quite different for 1948. Pamela Davidson wrote two important articles (2009a and 2009b) on the relation between Bowra and Pasternak and in one of them she makes an interesting claim which concerns Costello.⁶⁴ We have a booklet of ten poems by Pasternak, dated April 10, 1948, that contains an inscription to Bowra.⁶⁵ It reads as follows:

10 April 1948

To dear C. M. Bowra

as sign of my deepest acknowledgment with my warmest thanks for his

64 Both Lenihan and McNeish follow Davidson on this. Lenihan writes: "Pasternak's feelings about Costello did not prevent him from making use of Costello as a courier. In April 1948 Costello arranged for a booklet of poems by Pasternak to be sent to Maurice Bowra (1898–1971), classical scholar, literary critic and Warden of Wadham College Oxford; and in December 1948 Costello was instrumental in getting letters from Pasternak to his relations in Oxford." All these claims are rather cautious in that they speak of sending the material for Bowra "via" Costello. Taken literally this claim would not need Costello's presence in England but certainly his active participation in arranging the delivery. I will claim that this is unsubstantiated for April 1948 and correct for December 1948 and June 1950.

65 Pamela Davidson provides a detailed description of the document (Hoover Institution Archives. Collection of Irwin Holtzman, Box 22, Folder 14. Reproduced in: Fleishman 1990: 176–177): "A booklet of twenty-two leaves (18 cm x 22 cm), tied together with a yellow and green silk cord, comprising the typewritten text of ten poems from *Doctor Zhivago*. The inscription to Bowra, written in brown ink in Pasternak's flowing hand and dated April 10, 1948, appears on the first leaf. The next leaf (unnumbered) is headed 'Stikhi iz romana v proze'. The remaining leaves (numbered 1–20) contain the following poems: 'Gamlet' (1), 'Mart' (2), 'Na Strastnoi' (3–5), 'Ob'iasnenie' (6–7), 'Bab'e leto' (8), 'Zimniaia noch' (9–10), 'Rozhdestvenskaia zvezda' (11–14), 'Rassvet' (15–16), 'Chudo' (17–18), 'Zemlia' (19–20). Three of these poems ('Mart', 'Bab'e leto', 'Zimniaia noch') were published, without reference to the novel, in the same year in Pasternak's *Izbrannoe* (Moskva 1948: 151, 152, 154). In the twenty-five 'Stikhotvoreniia Iuriia Zhivago' that make up the last chapter of the novel, the poems included in the booklet occur in the same order, numbered 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21. There are some minor differences of capitalisation, layout, and language between the typewritten poems in the booklet and the published text" (Davidson 2009b: 82–83).

rare and profound articles on Blok, Rilke and on myself –
 whole heartedly
 Б Пастернак

10 апр. 1948

Москва

Show it, please, to my sister and others.

On the authority of an oral communication by E. B. Pasternak and E. V. Pasternak, Davidson attributes to Costello the role of middle man in the delivery of the booklet. She says:

Pasternak evidently sent his booklet of poems to Bowra in April 1948 via Desmond Patrick <Paddy> Costello, a classicist and Russian scholar with a degree from Trinity College, Cambridge, employed as Third Secretary at the New Zealand Embassy in Moscow from 1945 to 1950 (oral communication to the author from E. B. Pasternak and E. V. Pasternak, Oxford, 14 November 2007). On Costello's left-wing sympathies and reputation as a spy, see the biography by James McNeish, *The Sixth Man* (Vintage New Zealand, 2007). A few months later, on 12 December 1948, Pasternak wrote to his relations in Oxford (again via Costello), informing them that he would try to send them the "half" of *Doktor Zhivago* that was so far completed, and asking them to arrange for three copies to be typed "чтобы потом можно было дать почитать узкому кругу интересующихся, начиная с Боуры, Шиманского и других" (Pasternak, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, 9: 555).

(Davidson 2009b: 76, note 5)

All these attributions are given without sources backing them up and appealing only to the authority, which is great indeed, of E. B. Pasternak and E. V. Pasternak. Let's see how they stand to scrutiny.

Let us consider first the delivery of the booklet of poems in April 1948. The first element that speaks against attributing to Costello a role in the delivery is that Costello was not in England at the time. There are simply no recorded trips of Costello to England during this period and Davin's diary,

which usually records Costello's visit, says nothing at all about Costello being in England. That Costello was not the courier for this delivery is also confirmed by his own statement to Davin. In a letter dated April 24, 1953 he wrote: "Bowra I don't know"⁶⁶ – my only contact with him was in the quality of courier between Boris Pasternak & him, when I brought him some poems of P.'s in 1950" (ATL, MS-Papers-5079-437). I think this is decisive evidence to exclude his role as courier between Pasternak and Bowra in April 1948.

It could still be claimed, lacking any alternative account of the delivery, that Costello was nonetheless instrumental in arranging the delivery some way or other. If this is what he did the envelope does not seem to have gone through Davin's hands (Davin's diary records no such event nor a meeting with Bowra for the period April 10–May 10, 1948⁶⁷). Perhaps Costello only had the envelope for Bowra already fully addressed sent to the New Zealand House in London via diplomatic pouch from where it could have been sent directly to Bowra in Oxford. But lacking any supporting evidence this hypothesis is just as good as any other plausible scenario. Anne Holdcroft could have done the same. Thus I think that the burden of proof here rests with those who want to attribute Costello a role in the delivery of poems to Bowra in April 1948. So far that burden has not been met.

But Pamela Anderson also cites events dating to December 1948. And Costello did definitely play a role in what should be considered an important event, namely the delivery of the first part of *Doctor Zhivago* to his sisters. What has however hitherto escaped attention is Costello's trip to England in October 1948.

October 1948

In October 1948, Costello visited Oxford. We have confirmation of this visit both from Lydia Pasternak's diaries and more explicitly from Dan Davin's diary. Lydia Pasternak records a phone call by Costello on October 25:

66 Given what follows, Costello is probably saying that he does not know Bowra well as he met him only once. Or, given that the sentences preceding those quoted here concern whether Bowra could be a potential supporter in his attempt to get a University Chair in Russian, he simply expresses uncertainty as to whether Bowra could be a supporter. The "or" is inclusive and not exclusive.

67 I thank Ken Ross, who checked this segment of Davin's diary.

“Costello зв. что видел Борюшу”⁶⁸; and immediately after there is a reference to something happening at Davin’s involving Costello: “k Davin” (“to Davin’s”).⁶⁹ Davin, on Monday, October 25, 1948, records in his diary that on Thursday, October 22, he was in London, where he lunched with Paddy (and Bil) and Geoffrey Cox. Then he notes that on Sunday 24 Paddy and Bil reached Oxford and stayed with them (the Davins). On Thursday 28 Davin records the following:

Monday night <October 25> the Pasternak sisters, Ursie⁷⁰, Tracy⁷¹, came around and we produced a bottle of Sherry and two jugs of beer. Paddy sang Russian, French, Italian, Gaelic and we had a delightful evening. It was a great pleasure to watch the two P<asternak>’s glowing. Tuesday. A. N. <Arthur Norrington – recently appointed Secretary to the Delegates> was ill, and so I had a great business arranging the F. C. <Finance Committee> meeting etc. Paddy and Bil left by 11 o’clock train.⁷² (October 28, 1948, ATL, MSY-3834)

While the evidence I will provide below seems to exclude that Pasternak might have sent anything more than verbal greetings, I can definitely show that Costello, on his way back from Oxford, brought to Pasternak and his brother Aleksandr (Shura) letters from his relatives in Oxford. A first indication is the opening of Pasternak’s letter to his relatives dated December 12,

68 “Costello called to say that he saw Boriusha” (PFP, HILA, box 119, October 25, 1948).

69 The entry has a smudge where “Davin” appears but I have no doubt that that is the name.

70 This is conjectural but the best guess comes from Keith Ovenden, who thinks that this is “a misspelling of Ursy, which is how Winnie <Davin> would have spelt it, who was Ursula Joachim Beck. Winnie had known her very well during the War, and they were close friends. She was known as a wealthy and entertaining hostess in post-War Oxford. Grand-daughter of the great German violinist and friend of Brahms.” Brigid Sandford Smith (message to the author dated October 19, 2020) confirmed the identification of Ursy with Ursula Beck.

71 Unidentified, perhaps “Terry” or “Tony”.

72 I am very grateful to Keith Ovenden for his help on the transcription of this excerpt.

1948: “My dear Fedia⁷³ and girls! It was an enormous joy to get your letters, photographs, the children’s wonderful letters in Russian, and the live accounts of people who had seen you” (Pasternak 2010: 375; see also Pasternak 2004b: 772 and 2005: 555).

It is obvious from this opening that the letters were brought by someone who had seen Pasternak’s relatives in Oxford. We know Costello had called Lydia on October 25 and that they had dinner together at Davin’s. But that is not sufficient to clinch the case. However, on October 26 Lydia writes in her diary: “Отобрала фоты для Москвы.”⁷⁴ It is clear that Lydia was preparing the materials to send to Moscow. And on the same day she mentions: “Писала долго письма.”⁷⁵

While pursuing evidence in favor of my hypothesis I had conjectured that mention of the receipt of the letters and the photos might also be found in letters from Aleksandr and Ina (Pasternak’s brother and his wife) to Lydia and Josephine.⁷⁶ This was confirmed by a letter from Aleksandr and Ina to Lydia and Josephine dated December 8, 1948.⁷⁷ After an initial reference to the letters from Lydia and Josephine, the text reads: “Ваши фотографии мне очень понравились. У вас прекрасные дети, я просто очарован ими.”⁷⁸ And Ina adds: “Дорогие Жоня и Лида.⁷⁹ Так рада была опять видеть ваши почерки и прекрасные карточки”⁸⁰ and she also referred to the photos.

73 Fyodor Pasternak, Josephine Pasternak’s husband.

74 “Picked out photos for <to send to> Moscow” (PFP, HILA, box 119, October 26, 1948).

75 “Wrote letters for a long time” (PFP, HILA, box 119, October 26, 1948).

76 Josephine Pasternak (1900–1993) was a philosopher and a poet. Her *Nachlaß* is preserved in the Pasternak Family Papers at the Hoover Institution Library and Archives.

77 I thank Lazar Fleishman for having sent me a transcription of this letter, whose original is in the Pasternak Family Papers at Hoover Institution Library and Archives at Stanford. See also Fleishman 2020.

78 “I really liked your photos. You have wonderful children, I am simply fascinated by them.”

79 Josephine and Lydia.

80 “Dear Zhonya and Lida. So glad to see your handwriting and beautiful cards again.”

When all of this was in place, I was very pleased to receive the decisive piece of evidence that Petr Evgenievich Pasternak⁸¹, Boris' grandson, was able to be found for me in the family archive in Moscow. At my request, Petr had been looking for the original letters by Lydia (which, on the strength of the diary entry, I conjectured were written on October 26, 1948) but he found something even better. On October 26, 1948, Lydia Pasternak wrote to Paddy Costello the following letter:

<Envelope: Only recto; No stamp or postal mark⁸²>

D. P. Costello, Esq.
c/o Mrs. S. Lerner
2, Edenbridge Rd.
London, E. 9

<lower left corner> Exp. L. Pasternak-Slater
20, Park Town
Oxford

20, Park Town
Oxford
Tel. 47994

-
- 81 I am very grateful to Petr Pasternak for all his efforts in looking for Lydia's original letters to Boris and for this unexpected gift.
- 82 Together with this letter and the envelope, there is a second envelope which originally contained the letter from Josephine. It is stamped Oxford 4-PM 28 OCT 1948 and carries the following information:

<recto> D. P. Costello Esq.,
c./o. Mrs. S. Lerner
2, Edenbridge Road,
London, E. 9.

<verso> 18, Carey Close,
Five Mile Drive,
Oxford

26.10.48

Dear Mr. Costello,

You cannot imagine what a pleasure it was for us to meet you and to hear all the nice things you told us about Moscow, my brother, and the general atmosphere; the fact that you and your charming wife have only just been there and are going back again – makes things so much more cheerful and real!

Thank you very, very much for it all! I am only sorry that we will not see you again – at any rate not in the near future, – because – though we only saw you for a few hours, I have the definite feeling that we could become – or even have become good friends! I suppose the innumerable sherries and your songs, and all these nice young people you were staying with, have helped towards it. At any rate I very much hope that we will hear from you again, even from Moscow!

And now I am going to make use of your very kind offer of transmitting letters to and from my brothers, if possible.

I am sending a bunch of snaps (21) – rather small ones, but I suppose they have spectacles or a magnifying glass and will be able to make out who is who, and what is what.

My daughter suddenly got an impulse to write to Shura⁸³, my second brother, so I encouraged her to do so, and I shall be very grateful indeed if you could either see him, or, if this is not possible, find out indirectly, how he is, where he is, what is son Федя <Fedia> is doing, and his wife Ина <Ina>, – (they are both architects), and if he will not himself – (or one of their family) write to me – perhaps you could let me know about them, as well as about Boris and the Adelsons (Stella⁸⁴ and her husband and mother). I am sure I am overburdening you, but once I start thinking of them – there are so many other relations one knows nothing about – there is Ольга Фрейденберг <Ol'ga Freidenberg> – a university professor

83 Aleksandr Pasternak (1893–1982) was an architect. He was Boris' brother and lived in Moscow.

84 Stella Adelson was one of Lydia's closest friends. There is an extensive correspondence between Lydia and Stella in the Pasternak Family Papers at Hoover Institution Library and Archives.

or something in Leningrad – our cousin, then my mother’s sister, тетя Клара <Aunt Clara⁸⁵> and her daughter and perhaps grandchildren – also in Leningrad – then some friends who recently returned to Russia after a long exile in Germany and France – (Вера Угримова <Vera Ugri-mova⁸⁶> and her parents and daughters) – well I am sure, you will soon start cursing me, if you have not done so already before! – If you could make Боря <Boria> write about them all – but I very much doubt that he will! – but he might just let you know, what he knows about them all and perhaps you or Mrs. Costello would be so kind and drop us a line?! Needless to say I would be only too happy to do anything I can for you or your family, but I quite realize that it is not likely that such circumstances would arise, though one never knows.

I would also very much like to hear more about your own children – and if possible look at a snap of them! Do they learn in an ordinary Russian school, or are there special schools for foreigners – diplomats, etc.? I am rather ashamed that my kids write such awful Russian with so many faults (as you will see from their letters), but it is almost impossible to teach them, particularly without a proper Russian grammar (– incidentally I would be very grateful if Boris could send me one – I have got a «букварь» <spelling book> but no grammar, and one could not get one in London up till now!)

I tried to get you “Futility” and “The Polyglots” by Gerhardt⁸⁷ but unfortunately did not succeed, so I am sending you an old copy I had. I hope you will have a pleasant journey, and I very much envy you because of your going to see Moscow and all my dear ones! Please do write and tell me all about them, after having seen Boris or Shura and handed them

85 Aunt Klara (Klara Kaufmann) was Rosa Pasternak’s sister. Rosa Pasternak was Boris Pasternak’s mother. See Pasternak 1982.

86 Vera Ugri-mova (1902–2002) was exiled from Soviet Russia in 1922 on board of the first so-called “philosophy steamer” (see Chamberlain 2006 and Glavatskii 2002). In 1947 she repatriated from France to the USSR. See her memoir (Reshchikova 1993).

87 William Gerhardt (1895–1977) was an Anglo-Russian writer. *Futility*, published in 1922, recounts his experience fighting the Bolsheviks.

over the letters and snaps. Please also remember me to Hayward, if you see him!

Ну, и вообще – огромное Вам спасибо за все – счастливого пути Вам обоим, и да хранит Вас всех Бор! <And anyway – thank you for everything – a pleasant journey to you both, and may God keep you all!>

Лида Пастернак-Slater <Lydia Pasternak-Slater>

(Pasternak family papers, Moscow)

This proves that Costello in October 1948 brought news of Pasternak and brought back letters from Pasternak's relatives in Oxford to Boris and Aleksandr (Shura) in Moscow. Incidentally, the letter also yields the information that Costello met Pasternak's sisters for the first time on October 25, 1948. And finally, the way the events unfolded strongly suggests the possibility that the idea of acting as courier was suggested by Costello and not by Pasternak himself.

Be that as it may, the delivery of the first part of *Doctor Zhivago* did not take place in October but in January 1949.

December 1948 – January 1949

I have reconstructed the events connected to the first smuggling of *Doctor Zhivago* to the West in my *Zhivago's Secret Journey* but I have a few details to add, so I will present, for completeness' sake, what we know.

In a letter to his sisters, dated December 12, 1948 (see Pasternak 2010; 2005, and 2004b), Pasternak announced that he was sending them the first part of *Doctor Zhivago*. The letter does not indicate who the carrier would be, but Pasternak warned his sisters not to publish the text, for, he said, "publication abroad would expose me to the most catastrophic, not to say fatal, dangers" (Pasternak 2010: 376; 2004b: 772; 2005: 555).

The first decisive evidence leading to a New Zealand connection with respect to a delivery of *Doctor Zhivago* I found, while working on my 2016 book, was a letter (dated April 12, 1956) from Martin Malia⁸⁸ to Isaiah Berlin. Speaking about a conversation with Pasternak, Malia wrote:

88 Martin Edward Malia (1924–2004) was a historian who focused on Russian history. He taught at UC Berkeley from 1958 to 1991.

In recent years, as you know, Pasternak has published little but translations. However, he has written a long and as I gather somewhat symbolic novel, containing a number of poetic passages, called *Dr. Zhivago*. It is apparently unprintable in the Soviet Union. He told me that last year he had sent out a copy of the first of five parts of this novel via a friend at the New Zealand Embassy and that this copy, he thinks, is now in the hands of Bowra. The other four parts are now in the process of revision and typing.

(BL, MS. Berlin 149, fols. 155–156)

Let me emphasize the word “friend,” a telling sign, if Malia is reporting accurately, that Pasternak’s relation towards Costello had changed from the early annoyance reported by Berlin. Given that the New Zealand Legation had closed in 1950 and that Malia’s letter is dated April 12, 1956, something is wrong with the claim that “last year,” that is in 1955, Pasternak could have sent anything through the New Zealand Legation. Malia surely misunderstood what Pasternak said. And indeed, we have independent evidence that the sending of the first part of *Doctor Zhivago* via some New Zealanders took place in late 1948 and the delivery, in January 1949.

On January 13, 1949, Lydia remarks in her diary: “К Давин – Lake, письма и фот<ы> и книжка из Москвы.”⁸⁹ And two days later, on January 15, Lydia remarks: “читала Б<орин> роман.”⁹⁰

There can be no doubt that January 13 is the date in which Lydia received the first part of *Doctor Zhivago*.⁹¹ We know that Dan Davin was Costello’s best friend. And the name Lake refers to Doug Lake⁹², who worked with Costello in Moscow at the New Zealand Legation. Davin recorded the meet-

89 “To Davin – Lake, letters and photos and book from Moscow” (PFP, HILA, box 119, January 13, 1949).

90 “Read Borya’s novel” (PFP, HILA, box 119, January 15, 1949).

91 The typescript is extant. It is preserved in the Pasternak Family Papers at the Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford (box 144). It is 180 pages long, it is dated 1948, and it contains the first four chapters of *Doctor Zhivago*. At the end of chapter 4 it says: “End of the first book.” Copies of the same typescript were also sent to Olga Freidenberg in Leningrad and to others in the USSR.

92 On the Lakes see note 39 and McNeish 2007b.

ing in his diary. On January 17, 1949 he wrote that Doug Lake appeared on Thursday, that is on the 13th, the day of the dinner where Lydia was one of the guests. Douglas Lake was on his way back to New Zealand with his wife Ruth Lake (née Macky; see note 39). They had finished their assignment in Moscow at the New Zealand Legation and stopped in England on their way back to New Zealand. Whether Ruth was at the dinner is unclear, perhaps not, for their daughter, Sarah, was hospitalized in Paris with pneumonia and Ruth might have stayed in Paris to take care of her. But we do know more. Costello was behind the arrangements that led to the delivery of the typescript to Pasternak's sisters. Indeed, he had met Pasternak with his wife, Bil (Bella), and the Lakes just before they left Moscow.

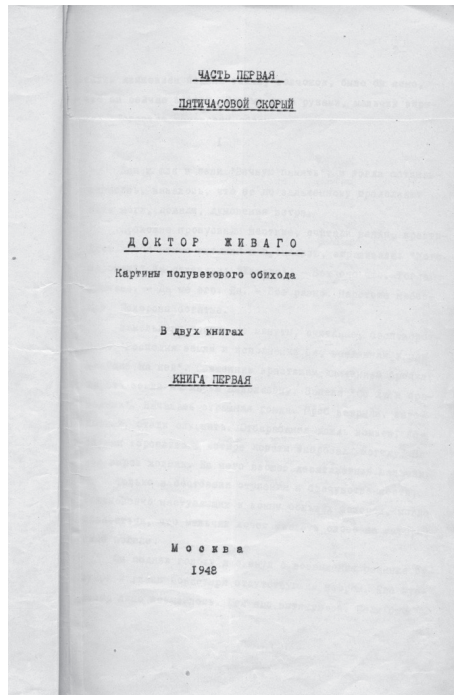


Fig. 2

The first page of the first typescript of Zhivago smuggled at the end of 1948

In his diary⁹³, under December 17, 1949, he notes:

On 5th Dec. I called on Pasternak. He said Soviet nationalism guided by the Party was a thing that they took for a little toy horse⁹⁴, safely bridled and reined; but the day might come when the thing would prove to be a bloody great stallion and bolt off in the wrong direction dragging them behind it. Saw him again, in company of Bil & Lakes, on 14th. We drank vodka and madeira he talked. "Akhmatova is not so much vicious as well-educated"; "she is ~~rather~~ sincere rather than гениальная <genial'-naia>."⁹⁵

Incidentally, this passage once and for all establishes Costello's authorship of Anonymous 1958.⁹⁶

First Costello saw Pasternak on December 5. Then Pasternak wrote the letter to his sisters, dated December 12, and got a copy of the typescript ready to be handed over to the New Zealanders, when they went to see him on the

93 This excerpt from Costello's diary is found in McNeish's research notes for his book *The Sixth Man* (folder "Pasternak") but it is not included in the book. I thank Philip Green and Barbara Figgess for their help in connection to McNeish's research folders for *The Sixth Man*.

94 Anonymous 1958 says: "For example, I remember his saying, back in 1948, that the Russian nationalism which was then being encouraged by the authorities (Russian priority in inventions, etc.) was a thing which they took for a toy horse, safely bridled; the day might come when it would prove to be a bloody great stallion and would bolt off in the wrong direction, dragging everybody after it."

95 Anonymous 1958 says: "He was worth hearing on the subject of his fellow-writers. Of one poetess he said, 'She is not so much immoral as well-educated. And she has sincerity rather than genius'" (87).

96 In addition to the evidence provided in footnotes 94 and 95 consider also the following passage and compare it to the letter to Davin (dated April 8, 1948) on Mandelshtam's date of death already cited: "Some time in 1946 I asked him if he could tell me the date of Osip Mandelstam's death. It was common knowledge that Mandelstam had been arrested in the Great Purge about 1937 and that he had died in Siberia, but I did not know exactly when. Neither did Pasternak, but he promised to find out (and very soon did so)" (88). Here Costello seems to misremember since from the letter to Davin it appears that this conversation on Mandelshtam's death occurred in 1948 and not 1946.

14th. How the typescript traveled is not known, perhaps by diplomatic pouch. If so, it would have arrived at the New Zealand House in London, where Tom Davin, Dan's brother, worked.⁹⁷ And from there Doug Lake might have brought it down to Oxford where Dan Davin lived and given it to Lydia at the dinner. While not all the details of how the typescript got to London, and from there to Oxford, are completely clear, it is however not in doubt that the New Zealand connection worked well and efficiently. The importance of the sending to the West of this typescript cannot be overestimated. It began the flow of (the more complete) typescripts of *Doctor Zhivago* that were to follow (see Mancosu 2016 and 2018).

June – July 1950

We now move to 1950. As we have seen, Costello himself in 1953 tells Davin that he had acted as courier for Pasternak in delivering poems to Bowra. Costello met Pasternak for the last time at the end of May 1950. This happened just before he closed down the legation in June 1950. He then spent from mid-June to July 20 in the United Kingdom and afterwards he traveled to New Zealand, leaving on July 20, for a two month stay.

We can fix the dates of Costello's visit to Oxford using Lydia Pasternak's diaries again.

On Sunday, July 2, we read: "Иду встр<ечать> Costello на велос.<и-пед> там Ж. и все пр. Довольно скучно и без толку."⁹⁸ And on Monday, July 3: "Зв. Costello что она может привести дочку теперь – правда скоро Elisabeth и Costello привели Катю – дикие глазки, маленькая и [в]умная верно."⁹⁹

97 Ross (2019b) points out that Tom Davin worked at the New Zealand House in London. In that article, Ross argues against Munro's claim (Munro 2018: 16) that the Lakes brought the typescript with them, as this would have "put them in an intolerable situation" (11). I actually remain agnostic as to how exactly the typescript traveled.

98 "Going to meet Costello <right now>, on a bicycle, Zh. <Josephine> and all the others are already there. Quite boring and pointless" (PFP, HILA, box 119, July 2, 1950).

99 "Costello called <saying that> she could bring her daughter now – and actually soon Elisabeth and Costello brought Katya – wild eyes, small, must be smart" (PFP, HILA, box 119, July 3, 1950).

Katya would be Katie, Costello's daughter, born in Moscow in 1946. Elizabeth was a friend of the Davins' who lived with them.¹⁰⁰ Lydia, as evident from the pronoun "она" ("she"), is speaking here about Mrs Costello.¹⁰¹

Davin too records this visit in his diary. On July 10, 1950, he notes that the Costellos had stayed the weekend at end of June and saw them again in London on Friday July 7.

Josephine Pasternak also noted the meeting in her diary, and it is more forthcoming on when Costello met Pasternak, in addition to confirming that the latter only sent oral greetings through Costello. On July 2, she wrote:

Вдруг звонок: Лидочка, что Costello приехал! После ужина я к Dan Davin. Встреча с Costello. Он видел Боря 26го мая. Б. не хотел писать, просил только передать, что все – are well, слава Богу. Гов. что Боря глядит, слава Богу, хорошо и как всегда, страшно молод.

Suddenly a call: Lidochka, <says> that Costello arrived!

After dinner I <went> to Dan Davin. Meeting with Costello. He saw Boria on the 26th of May. B didn't want to write, asked only that <Costello> relay that all – are well, thank God. Says that Boria looks well, thank God, and as always, looks very young.¹⁰²

100 Elizabeth Berndt. She had previously been Dan Davin's lover and they had a child together, Patty. See Ovenden (1996: 240) who provides evidence that Elizabeth was living at the Davins' from winter 1949–1950 to autumn 1950. Both Nicolas (Pasternak) Slater and Bridget Sandford Smith identified "Burns" with "Burndt". On June 23, 2015 Nicolas Slater wrote to the author:

"Dear Paolo,

If Lydia met 'Burns' in the context of meeting Dan Davin, I wonder if it could have been a woman whom she knew as Elizabeth Burns, although the woman's actual surname was something like Berndt. (I think her supposed surname of Burns started as a simple mis-hearing, and then it somehow stuck; but it's possible that she herself had chosen to anglicize her name). I remember almost nothing about Elizabeth Berndt, evidently not English, but with a fine command of the English language."

101 This is confirmed by Josephine's diary, who, on July 3, writes: "...Mrs. Costello с Катей – уезжают" ("...Mrs. Costello and Katie are departing").

102 Josephine Pasternak, Diary, July 2, 1950, PFP, HILA, Box 19, Folder 12. This citation is also found in Fleishman 2017: 179.

This is how McNeish, without knowledge of the above sources, summarizes the events:

A notable encounter had occurred in the summer of 1950 when the Moscow Legation was shut down and Costello arrived in Oxford on his way to New Zealand. He was acting as courier for Boris Pasternak. Costello first visited Pasternak's sister, Lydia Pasternak Slater, living in North Oxford, and brought letters and presents to her from her brother in Moscow; then he came to the Davins in Southmoor Road and stayed the night.

(McNeish 2007: 283)

While some of the summary is close enough, much of it is out of focus. Costello did not visit first Pasternak's sister. He was staying at the Davins' and would have gone there first; rather, it was the Pasternak sisters who went to Davin's place to see Costello. Also, more importantly and contrary to what McNeish claims, Josephine is explicit that Costello did not bring anything for Pasternak's sisters, neither letters nor presents. Indeed, there are no letters from Boris to his sisters in 1950, which provides further indirect evidence that Costello did not have anything for Lydia or Josephine although, as we have seen, he brought poems for Bowra.

Finally, McNeish (2007: 174) says:

On his last visit in 1949, invited to bring his family for a children's Christmas party, Costello was present when his host was called away to the telephone. Costello related afterwards that Pasternak returned after some minutes white-faced, in a state of shock, saying: "That was Stalin. He says he is writing a poem. He wanted my advice."

It is unclear where McNeish got the information that there was a Pasternak Christmas party at which the Costello family had been invited in December 1949. Perhaps from an interview with Peter Bartlett (see McNeish 2007: 350), who is referenced for the passage starting from "Costello related afterwards." I found no independent evidence for either claim. But McNeish should have seen (even without access to Josephine's diary) that the claim that Costello was bringing letters and presents from Pasternak in summer 1950 (283) and

the claim that he met the poet for the last time at Christmas 1949 (174) were hardly consistent with one another. In addition, the story of a phone call by Stalin in 1949 (in addition to the famous phone call in 1934 concerning Mandelshtam) strains credibility; it is either a deformation of the story of the real phone call from Stalin to Pasternak (which Anonymous 1958 also describes as taking place “while a party was in progress in Pasternak’s flat”¹⁰³) or a practical joke.¹⁰⁴ Moreover – and this completely discredits McNeish’s account – notice that after recounting the 1934 Stalin phone call in Anonymous 1958, Costello wrote: “Pasternak had never heard from Stalin again” (Anonymous 1958: 88–89).

Costello never met Pasternak again after May 1950.

6. Conclusion

During his last two years in Moscow, Costello worked on the edition of Griboedov’s *Gore ot uma* (Griboyedov 1951). Costello’s introduction, which thanks Max Hayward and Mrs. H. S. North¹⁰⁵, is dated Moscow, December 1949. There is a folder of correspondence concerning this project in the Oxford University Press archives. However, no mention of any collaboration with Pasternak is found there.

One of the original motivations for writing this paper was a certain amount of frustration with McNeish’s style of quotation, or lack thereof, in *The Sixth Man*. Not that I doubted the accuracy of his claims, but I was curious to find out exactly which sources he had used for supporting them.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ For the Costello’s version of the telephone call see footnote 30.

¹⁰⁴ Consulted on the McNeish quote under discussion, Mike Costello, the eldest of the Costello siblings, categorically excluded that there was ever such a party with the Costello children. He also recalled Paddy describing the Stalin phone call concerning Mandelshtam as something he had been told about and definitely not as something that happened in his presence. I am grateful to Mike Costello for this information.

¹⁰⁵ I have not been able to find out more about Mrs. North.

¹⁰⁶ There are still some mysteries concerning the sources McNeish used that I have not been able to unravel. In several parts of *The Sixth Man* McNeish refers to correspondence from Costello to the Lakes mainly for the period 1949–1950 when the

And so, in a way, I also ended up being a fact-checker. Throughout the paper I kept a close eye on McNeish's claims on the Pasternak-Costello relationship. Many of them have been shown to be correct and others definitely false.

Finally, in some cases, *pace* McNeish's confident assertions, we are still without answers. That is the "what we (still) don't know" part of my title. We still remain in the dark as to the exact timeline of Costello's meetings with Pasternak in 1945 and as to whether there were direct contacts between Berlin and Costello. Of course, it would have been interesting to have lengthier reports (either by Pasternak or Costello) on the contents of their conversations going beyond the specific aspects of the project for *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* and those mentioned in Anonymous 1958. All things that future researchers might be able to find answers to.

Meanwhile, I will be happy if this article provides the foundation for more extended investigations.

Acknowledgements

In writing this paper I have incurred many debts and it is a pleasure to acknowledge them now. I will divide the acknowledgments by country, as this will make it easier to remember those who assisted me:

Russia. Petr Pasternak, Boris Pasternak's grandson, has always been, for this paper as well as for my former work, a great support. He checked the family archive for letters from Lydia and Josephine to Boris and ended up finding

Lakes were back in New Zealand. Ms Sarah Lake, the daughter of Doug and Ruth Lake, confirmed to the author by email (August 31, 2020) that all the letters she had were given to the ATL in Wellington. At the ATL, the chief archivist, Ms McGregor, confirmed (email to the author dated September 13, 2020) that the letters from Costello to the Lakes are not at the ATL and correctly remarked: "Although James McNeish must have seen them when writing 'The Sixth Man,' which was published in 2007, and they are referenced in the book, he does not clearly state where he saw them. They are not with the collection of his papers that are held here." Indeed, McNeish seems to have gone out of his way to avoid revealing the location of the letters. Where did he find the letters? And where are they now?

the wonderful, and unexpected, letter from Lydia to Paddy Costello. Anna Koznova kindly checked the list of Pasternak's library holdings made in 1963 by Elena Vladimirovna Pasternak.

Italy. I would like to thank Antonello Venturi who shared with me materials from the Archivio privato Franco Venturi (Turin) that relate to the friendship between Venturi and Costello. In addition I am grateful, for their generous support of my Pasternak investigations, Carlo Feltrinelli, Domenico Procacci, and Stefano Garzonio.

United Kingdom (and Germany). My editor at Oxford University Press, Peter Momtchiloff, very kindly helped in reproducing essential documents from the Oxford University Press archives that relate to *The Oxford Book of Russian Verse* and to *Gore ot Uma*. Bridget Sandford Smith was very kind in answering various questions and, as literary executor of her father's work, in granting permission to quote from the Davin diaries and letters preserved at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington. Chris Costello (Munich) and his siblings (Mike, Josie, Katie) generously gave me permission to quote all the Costello materials cited in this paper. Henry Hardy has been, as usual, a great source of help in providing information and documents related to Isaiah Berlin. Permission to reproduce the Berlin citations was kindly granted by the trustees of the Isaiah Berlin Literary Trust. Nicolas (Pasternak) Slater and his siblings (Michael, Ann, and Catherine) have helped in answering many questions and gave me permission to quote all the material from the Pasternak Family Papers (Lydia's diaries and Josephine's diaries), in addition to Lydia's letter to Costello. Denis Lenihan helped with email exchanges concerning Costello.

United States. I am very grateful to Eric Wakin, Linda Bernard, and Sarah Patton for all their support and help in reproducing materials from the Pasternak Family Papers at Hoover Institution Library and Archives. Lazar Fleishman, as usual, has been wonderfully supportive and generous with his time and feedback on an earlier version of the paper. Incidentally, it was Lazar who, in an email dated March 4, 2015, drew my attention to McNeish's biography. I am also very grateful to Alexey Strekalov for his help decipher-

ing and translating some of the passages from Lydia's and Josephine's diaries. Thanks also to Anna Muza, who kindly helped checking a segment of Lydia Pasternak's diaries from 1946, and Semyon Leonenko who helped with passages from Lydia's July 1950 diaries.

New Zealand. I owe a big thank you to Davin's biographer, Keith Ovenden, for extensive correspondence concerning Davin and for help tracking down and transcribing passages from Davin's diaries. Ken Ross has also generously helped tracking down relevant sources at the Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL) in Wellington, pointing me to important material and discussing the Berlin-Costello relationship. Audrey Waugh, at the ATL in Wellington has been most patient and helpful in dealing with all my requests for reproducing materials and for information. Linda McGregor and Seán McMahon, also at ATL, very kindly helped me with some of my queries and finding relevant documents at ATL. James McNeish answered a number of questions back in 2015, when I was beginning to look into Costello's role in taking out the first version of *Doctor Zhivago* from Moscow to Oxford. The story, as I reconstructed it in my 2016 book, received much visibility in New Zealand thanks to an article in *The Listener* by Robin Munro, whom I thank for the article, for the extensive email correspondence, for having tracked down important information on my behalf, for having suggested several improvements to a previous version of this paper, and for having sent me as a present a copy of Davin 2019. The publisher of that book, Roger Hickin, was very kind in facilitating contacts. Many thanks also to Sarah Lake, for replying to my questions concerning some of the Costello-Lakes correspondence. Finally, last but not least, I am very grateful to Phillip Green, James McNeish's literary executor, for having allowed me to work through McNeish's research folders for *The Sixth Man* and to Barbara Figgess for her invaluable help with the search for, and the reproduction of, some of the relevant materials from McNeish's personal archive.

Archives

Pasternak Family Papers, Moscow: PFP, Mo

Pasternak Family Papers, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford:
PFP, HILA

Archivio privato Franco Venturi, Turin

Oxford University Press Archive, Oxford

Isaiah Berlin Manuscripts Collection, Bodleian Library, Oxford: BL, MS. Berlin

Max Hayward Papers, St Antony's College, Oxford

James McNeish Papers, Wellington, New Zealand

Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. Collections:

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Bertram, James, 1910–1993: Papers of James and Jean Bertram (MS-Group-0216).

McIntosh, Alister Donald (Sir), 1906–1978: Papers.

Douglas Lake, MS-Papers-8661-7: Douglas Lake – Correspondence from Moscow.

Michael King: Papers.

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Illustrations

Fig. 1: The Oxford Book of Russian Verse (Oxford, 1948. Title page.)

Fig. 2: The first page of the first typescript of *Zhivago* smuggled at the end of 1948 by D. P. Costello (Hoover Institution Library & Archives, Stanford)

Part III

First-Hand Accounts

Lewis S. Feuer

Cultural Scholarly Exchange in the Soviet Union in 1963 and How the KGB Tried to Terrorize American Scholars and Suppress Truths (a memoir)¹

During the spring semester of 1963, Kathryn B. Feuer, her husband, Lewis S. Feuer, and their fifteen-year-old daughter arrived in Moscow under the recently initiated scholarly exchange agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union. Kathryn Feuer was preparing her doctoral thesis on the writing of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*; Lewis Feuer, professor of philosophy and social science at the University of California at Berkeley, was to do research on contemporary trends in historical materialism in the Soviet Union; their daughter Robin, after much bureaucratic resistance, was admitted into a Soviet middle school located near the Hotel Ukraine.

Kathryn arrived in Moscow on Tuesday, March 14, 1963, approximately a month after the arrival of her husband and daughter. She planned to study the original manuscripts of *War and Peace* and to do research at Yasnaya Polyana. She discussed her work with several noted Soviet scholars, including Gudzy and Oksman. She greatly enjoyed the weeks she eventually spent that spring at Yasnaya Polyana; she gave a lecture there to the staff on her own findings; her husband and daughter stayed for some days with her in a small cabin that had once been occupied by Tolstoy's aunt.

¹ Text prepared by Anna Kulagina. Annotations, unless otherwise specified, have been added by the editor. The Russian version was previously published in *Tynianovskii sbornik: Piatye Tynianovskie chteniia*, ed. Marietta Chudakova (Riga/Moskva, 1994), 347–357. See also Lewis S. Feuer's "A Narrative of Personal Events and Ideas," *Philosophy, History, and Social Action. Essays in Honor of Lewis S. Feuer*, ed. Sidney Hook, William L. O'Neill, and Roger O'Toole (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2012), 1–86.

At Berkeley, Kathryn had had frequent discussions with the erudite scholar, Professor Gleb Petrovich Struve; he was working to complete an edition in several volumes of the collected poems of Anna Akhmatova. He had known Akhmatova since before the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 and cherished his memories of her. Gleb Struve's father was the famed Peter Struve, who together with Lenin had been the youthful founders of the Russian Social Democratic Party; indeed, Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, wrote a glowing one-page description of Gleb Struve as a baby in her autobiography.² At Berkeley, Gleb Struve had heard of a great poetic masterpiece, *Requiem*, that Anna Akhmatova had written, but no copy of which seemed to have reached either Western Europe or America. He desired to have a copy both as a professor of Russian poetry, and as the editor of her complete works.

He knew that his trusted friend, the respected scholar, Julian Grigorievich Oksman, had read the poem and had a copy in his possession. But Gleb Struve knew that the utmost discretion was required in approaching Oksman. For the old scholar had but recently emerged from many years spent in Soviet labor camps and prisons; as a friend and co-worker of Nikolai Bukharin, whom Lenin called "the favorite of the party," he had been beaten and tortured, and his health was permanently damaged. He was now allowed to resume work but was kept in the background in an editorial capacity for the Soviet Literary Encyclopedia. Struve had not dared trust any of his colleagues to seek out Oksman to secure and bring back to the United States a copy of *Requiem*. But he did trust Kathryn's courage, sincerity, and judgement with such a mission.³

Her visit to the Soviet Union was thus made remarkable by the accomplishment of this task. But in doing so, she unwittingly brought the attentions and threats of KGB both against herself and the heroic Oksman, alumnus of

2 Cf. "Nina Struve wrote me, by the way, that her baby boy was 'already holding his head up, and every day we show him the portraits of Darwin and Marx, and say: 'Nod to Uncle Darwin, nod to Uncle Marx' – and he nods in such an amusing way" (Nadezhda Krupskaya, *Reminiscences of Lenin*, URL: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/krupskaya/works/rol/rolo2.htm> (May 15, 2021))

3 See Struve's correspondence with Oksman: Lazar Fleishman, "Iz arkhiva Guverovskogo instituta. Pis'ma Yu. G. Oksmana k G. P. Struve," *Stanford Slavic Studies* 1 (1987), 16–70.

labor camps and prisons. I shall always remember how when I met him, he pointed to his bald head and said how many times “they” had beaten it. I shall narrate the circumstances of this episode in the severing of the literary iron curtain.

Gleb Struve sent word to Julian Grigorievich Oksman that a young woman scholar would be calling on him, and that he was sure Oksman would enjoy literary discussions with her. Kathryn telephoned Oksman and went to see him. A young woman secretary was working with him when Kathryn arrived. Kathryn told him of her work on Tolstoy, and Oksman encouraged her with enthusiasm to pursue the views that she outlined to him. Kathryn found him an incomparable master of Russian literature, rich with knowledge and insight. He eventually presented her with a typewritten copy of *Requiem*. During the winter and spring of 1963, they had several long discussions about literary and scholarly trends, about his years of imprisonment and exile. When he learned that I was much interested in political sociology and had read Bukharin’s books, he expressed a strong interest in meeting me. Kathryn promised she would bring me next time. I was pleased by his invitation, though I indicated that my knowledge of the Russian language was scarcely sufficient to follow a discussion of literary criticism.

Kathryn now wondered what method she should use to send to America the rare copy she had of Akhmatova’s poem. Our letters through the Soviet mail were frequently opened – rather clumsily so – and if we made a package of *Requiem*, we faced the fact that all packages had to be made at the special counter in the Soviet post office, with the mail clerk doing the packing herself. The Akhmatova manuscript obviously would never get by. Then Kathryn remembered that a former classmate of hers at the Russian Institute of Columbia University was now a foreign service officer at the American Embassy in Moscow.⁴ Besides being a scholar of literature, he was a keen political thinker. Of course, as an Exchange Scholar attached to the Soviet Academy, I had the privilege of sending my letters through the diplomatic pouch, but Kathryn’s Columbia classmate kindly expressed a willingness

4 Jack F. Matlock Jr. In 1961–1963, he was cultural attaché at the American Embassy in Moscow (in 1974, he was reappointed to Moscow for another term of four years, and in 1987–1991 served as the U.S. Ambassador to Russia).

to help send this new poem of Akhmatova's through an even more private pouch. Kathryn sealed and addressed *Requiem* to Gleb Struve in Berkeley, and under diplomatic protection, it was sent to the United States, where Struve gave it its place in his definitive edition of Akhmatova's poems.

In World War I when Gleb Petrovich was a young Russian officer, during the Bolshevik Revolution, he had been sentenced to death for refusing to remove his epaulets. (After the revolution occurred, the Red Army had ordered all the officers to do this.) But the soldiers couldn't bring themselves to shoot this youngster who the night before his awaited execution sat in his cell reading a novel by Dostoevsky. They let this eccentric go free. Before he escaped across the snows to Finland, he had had the good fortune to meet Anna Akhmatova, and his voice still shook when he recalled her poetic beauty. In 1965–66 he had heard she would be visiting England to receive an honorary degree; so Struve arranged his research so as to be in Britain when she arrived.⁵ Though several decades had imprinted their duration on the physical embodiment of Anna Akhmatova, Struve's eyes were still those of the youth who had lived in a timeless reality which only the wondrous poet could traverse. The last lecture I heard him give at Berkeley in 1966 was about his meeting again with Akhmatova when she had come to receive her honorary degree.

Kathryn and I finally went together to Oksman's apartment on the evening of Monday, May 23, 1963. These were my first impressions of him as I wrote them down later that night in my journal:

Oksman. A short, stocky man – very warm in his manner, shaking my hand, his arm on my shoulder, sunken eyes which often closed, a tough bald face and head, reminding me of a cross between Jean Valjean and Will Herberg. He had a table for us of oranges, rolls, and butter – a regular party; he was just back from Crimea, and showed us pictures of his circle there, Mrs. Babel, Nekrasov et al. To them he had spoken of [Gleb] Struve's articles; they used to denounce Struve as monarchist, as a fascist, but now they feel his analysis was right. Evidently the government

5 Akhmatova travelled to England to receive the honorary degree of Oxford University in June 1965. Struve had several meetings with her in England.

took the Pen'kovsky case seriously as there were reshufflings of the general staff. There was a serious scandal in April in Leningrad; the president of the Leningrad Soviet, Smirnov, was implicated for a sum of one million rubles; five persons were executed in April. Frol Kozlov was somehow involved, and this was the cause of his stroke. At party meetings, members have been ordered to follow the Khrushchev line – that the published Tvardovsky interview with Shapiro was meant for foreign, primarily American consumption. [Aleksandr Trifonovich Tvardovsky was then editor-in-chief of *Novyi Mir* and a distinguished poet; Henry Shapiro was the accredited bureau chief for many years of a leading American news agency, the United Press.] I preferred hearing, however, of Oksman's reminiscences of his friend Bukharin and their "right-wing" group. Oksman began with the early years of 1918–1919.

He (Oksman) was a Left Communist, a friend of Bukharin, an opponent of Brest-Litovsk [the peace treaty negotiated with Germany despite Trotsky's protest]. Kamenev was an intellectual; his last work was a brilliant edition of Chernyshevsky. But Bukharin was a real leader of the working class. Kamenev was slated to be elected permanent secretary of the Soviet Academy; on that day, he was arrested. Oksman went to Bukharin to tell him about it; Bukharin closed his ears in desperation; he wouldn't hear about it; he wanted to believe in Stalin. Oksman tried to adopt Kamenev's daughter, but she was taken away to an orphan asylum. Oksman told a story of Khrushchev at the recent writer's meeting. Khrushchev, urging the importance of their political resolution, said: "Shakespeare can wait. I went to see Shakespeare's *Mary Stuart* [sic], about an old woman, it can wait." Khrushchev doesn't understand the intellectuals.

Bukharin's wife, whom he [Oksman] remembered as a young pretty woman, came out of seventeen years' exile, old. She went to Khrushchev to plead for her husband's rehabilitation. Khrushchev gave her an audience and told her they were preparing to do so. She wept before him. But nothing happened. Kamenev was an intellectual but, Oksman repeated, Bukharin was a real leader of the working class.

Oksman talked of the source of the close association between Khrushchev and Ilychev. Ilychev, an editor of *Pravda* or *Izvestia*, published an article by Khrushchev on agrotowns, which Stalin denounced as non-

sense; Ilychev was removed from his job. People are being warned not to associate with foreigners, and to give reports on them. The students are for Cuba, but the mature intellectuals mistrust Castro, they don't like his adventurism. A big economic crisis in the making, – no feed for animals on hog farms in the Urals, so they have been allowed to go wild. Molotov had warned against Khrushchev's agricultural plans. China Oksman regards as unimportant; the young people here are unafraid to speak and are indifferent to Marxism. If there's a war, he thinks they would not support Khrushchev, not fight. The Communist Party apparatus in the Ukraine is fascist, and both anti-Semitic and anti-Russian, zoologically so. Ukrainians are favored in posts, on the Praesidium, on the Central Committee. The Central Committee had said that Tvardovsky's interview was his own opinion, and meant for foreigners, that party members should not be deceived.

There are signs of a new cult of personality. General Popitov had an article in *Zvezda* saying that Khrushchev was the genius of war. The ideological plenum has been postponed because they don't yet know their own position. Polakov, journalist who is anti-Semitic, writes Khrushchev's speeches; Polakov flatters him; Khrushchev is now old. As for Kozlov, a *dur[a]k*, a cardsharp. At the 1962 congress of Russian writers, the Tula representative boasted that whereas sixty years ago, they had one writer in Tula, now they have eighty-six. [That one writer sixty years ago was Tolstoy.]

Writers now have to join the local factory or neighborhood party organization, not the writers' party organization. This is intended to break down the separation of writers. The Writers' Union will exist to help poor writers.

The University of Saratov students defended Oksman during 1946–1956 when the Communist Party organization attacked him, and he was living there in exile. He lived in a dormitory; they threatened to return him to prison and spied on his lectures. In the Academy, there are many fascists. Konstantinov, the director of the Institute of Philosophy, is one of them. The French students are known to be protesting against the party line in art. Soviet students have heard of this protest against the “art line” and are influenced by it.

Oksman said his book on Belinsky was held up for three years because he refused to delete a passage on Bakunin which said that at one time Bakunin's influence in Europe was greater than Marx's. Finally, to save the rest of the material, he deleted three pages.

Oksman talked about how much Russian writer drinks – a great deal.

Kathryn subsequently went to say goodbye to Oksman as she was shortly leaving with our daughter Robin to return home by railroad to Leningrad and Helsinki, and then to Stockholm, Copenhagen and by boat to Montreal. Oksman was entering a Soviet hospital for treatment. I promised I would visit him there to say goodbye.

On Saturday, June 8, 1963, I went to the hospital of the Soviet Academy, the Bol'nitsa Akademii Nauk, and I found Oksman, wearing a patient's loose-fitting clothes and an Uzbek hat, walking about in the garden. He looked better, more rested, but very old. We sat in the garden till it began to rain, and then we went inside to a large room with easy chairs in which patients lounged and talked with friends and families. Oksman spoke with great warmth about Kathryn – never had he met a woman "tak." [sic!]

I gave him some copies of *New Politics* (an American liberal socialist magazine); he was interested in an article on Siquerios and the French Intellectuals. He said how Peter Struve had been right, that he had seen better than any of them that the Russian people weren't ready for socialist revolution. It was sad to hear this statement from him at the end of a lifetime built on revolutionary faith. He told how Bukharin, Kamenev, and Gorky had gone to Kirov with a plan for reorganizing the Central Committee. Later he said Bukharin was worried with marital problems, and had married a second wife, a young woman. Oksman recalled Boris Nikolaevsky with pleasure, and I told him he was in New York and Berkeley. Oksman told me General Ivan Serov, a former police chief, had killed himself in a Tashkent Military School. Another man had meanwhile come to visit Oksman, and, saying good-bye, I left the hospital.

Kathryn and Robin arrived in Leningrad after a night where, in their railway sleeping quarters, they were crudely molested by rather obvious KGB operatives searching for incriminating evidence. At the Europa Hotel Kathryn pondered an unfinished letter she had written to Gleb Struve describing her

literary discussions with Oksman and then she replaced the letter in her bag. She went down to the lobby to make some queries concerning her travel to Helsinki, when suddenly, as she stood at the counter, she realized that her handbag was missing. She recovered it shortly thereafter and discovered that her letter to Struve had been taken away. She became especially apprehensive when she recollected that she had mentioned in her letter that I had been with her at Oksman's apartment, and that the KGB therefore had "evidence" against me. Furthermore, it was Friday, and I would not be leaving until next Tuesday, which gave the KGB operatives time enough to try to contrive some sort of accusation against me.

Meanwhile, that day, Friday June 7, I was giving my final lecture to the Institute of Philosophy on my impressions of Soviet philosophy and sociology. The Director, Konstantinov, was chairman; the listeners filled the room so that even the standees were at maximum, and a *New York Times* correspondent was present. I spoke about the "unproblems" of Soviet sociology, what they were not allowed to study, how the Stalinist "cult" and tyranny had affected the lives of the children of the many prisoners; how anti-Semitism, on the study of which many American sociologists had devoted much effort, had not been the focus of a single sociologist in the Soviet Union; that Soviet philosophy was "*protiv*" every original philosophical idea but that it never advanced any fresh idea itself, and that it should be called "*protivism*"; that actually all sorts of philosophers in the Soviet Union pretended they were Marxists though actually they might be pragmatists, existentialists, positives, Popperians, idealists, Deweyans, though each of them would select a different set of texts from Marx's writing from which to express his own favorite perspective. They wanted me to continue the following Monday, but I had to pack, mail books, and say good-bye to friends on that day, as I was leaving early Tuesday morning.⁶

6 The discussion and debate at the Institute were described in three articles, – one by myself, "Meeting the Philosophers," in *Survey*, London, April, 1964, a second, in *The New York Times*, Sunday, June 16, 1963, under the headline, "American Angers Soviet Hosts; Says They Fear to be Candid," and a third, a bitter diatribe by the secretary of the Institute, V. V. Mshvenieradze, published in *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 11, 1963, pp. 149–152. (Note by Lewis Feuer.)

When on the morning of Monday, June 10th, I went to the American Embassy to bring back the books I had borrowed from the library, the librarian told me that my friends on the embassy staff wanted to talk with me. Kathryn had arrived in Helsinki with Robin but had informed the embassy there that she was very worried about my safety. It transpired that her train to Helsinki had been held up near the border; several Soviet security men had taken her off the train, confronted her with her unfinished letter to Struve, and charged her with having engaged in anti-Soviet activities with Julian Grigorievich Oksman. My wife said she had had long literary discussions concerning Soviet scholarship and criticism with respect to such classical authors as Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, as well as the contemporary poets and novelists, but that they had discussed no political actions or political party programs. She said their literary discussions were exactly of the kind that literary scholars conducted in all civilized countries of the world – England, France, Italy, America – and that visiting Soviet scholars in America thoroughly enjoyed. She refused to sign any document that they presented to her. Our daughter watched these proceedings. Finally, the Soviet Security agents threw her passport on the ground and let her go. On arriving at Helsinki, Kathryn telephoned the embassy at once, told them of the incident, and asked them to request the American Embassy in Moscow to notify me of all that had occurred, and the probable difficult situation that would be contrived.

The embassy officials were much troubled and wondered whether they should accompany me to the airplane bound for Warsaw (and Paris). They agreed, however, to let me handle the situation as it arose. I said my stand was a simple one: that I had had political and historical discussions concerning the evolution of Soviet society of a kind in which any social scientist pursuing his work would have engaged, but that as Oksman's literary discussions with my wife were concerned, the vocabulary used, and the literary movements and writers to which and to whom they alluded were entirely beyond my comprehension. My personal friends in the embassy were much concerned; our chief friend, Kathryn's fellow-student from Columbia, was, however, cheerful.

When I said good-bye to my friends at the Israeli Embassy, where we had been guests at a wonderful Passover observance, I learned that one of the Israeli diplomats was scheduled to be on the same airplane as I, bound for

Warsaw. I asked for a favor: would he note whether I boarded the plane, and if I did not, would he notify the American Embassy as soon as I was not seen among the passengers. The Israeli diplomats agreed to help.

Early Monday morning, the Institute Director's assistant, Yury Lebedeff, delivered me to the Western European ticket check-in, and on the plea of work (contrary to his custom – in the past when he had accompanied me – of waiting until I actually boarded) promptly disappeared. Two uniformed men, and one non-uniformed, approached me. Would I come with them, asked the non-uniformed one? We walked across the courtyard to a small house. There were three of them around a table, one youngish man, with a pince-nez, and speaking English pedantically; a second was a border guard official, speaking only Russian, with a detective's demeanor; the third was a genial Foreign Office diplomat, rather friendly. At first there were polite pleasantries; had I enjoyed my visit? Had I learned much? Then finally, the youngish cross-examiner produced from his portfolio a paper encased in glass. Did I recognize the handwriting? Yes, I did; it seemed to be my wife's. With the intensely bright light in the middle of the room, I actually was having trouble reading it. Where, I asked, had they gotten this letter? They were ambiguous as to its history. But they noted it referred to one Oksman, and they asked what had he discussed with my wife that evening. I regretted that my knowledge of Russian language was not adequate to the intricacies of literary criticism.

It became clear to me that they knew nothing about my second meeting with Oksman, alone. At one point the border official noted angrily that I had understood their interchange. "But that was very elementary Russian," I said, and the Foreign Office man couldn't help laughing. They examined my bag; the only written pages I had were of a lecture on Marx, and a critique of historical materialism. "We are not interested in Marx," said the cross-examiner.

They turned the bag inside out; the border official couldn't believe there was nothing there and grew obviously tense. The soldier-guard, standing stiffly and erectly, seemed to be awaiting an order; instead, a conference took place outside between the cross-examiner and the official. Probably they were calling for instructions. The Foreign Office man looked whimsical: "They will not do anything to you," he said, "but I do not think they will

ever let you come again.” I said I did not think that I would ever care to come again. Then the two interrogators returned. They had many more questions. Did I know this Struve to whom my wife’s letter was addressed? “Yes,” I said, “he is a famous professor of Russian literature at the University of California, and he is the son of the famous Peter Struve, who founded with Lenin the Russian Social Democratic party, and whom Krupskaya, Lenin’s wife, in her autobiography, describes playing with when he was a baby.” They were upset by all this and seemed at a loss for what to say. Then I added, perhaps out of a sense of humor, that also, an hour’s ride from my home lives the former Prime Minister of the Provisional Government, Alexander Kerensky. This statement came as a kind of shock to them. Evidently, Kerensky, a figure of 1917, a Pre-Soviet Premier, was regarded forty-six years later in 1963 as being dead, but here he was still alive. Was he plotting intervention with the help of Herbert Hoover, the Hoover Institutionalists, and persons like myself? I remarked that although I had never met Kerensky, many people had heard him speak at Stanford University. (The following year I did hear a lecture by Kerensky.)

So, the hours went by. They said they release me but that I have to sign a paper agreeing that my wife and I had had a discussion with Oksman. I said I would only agree to what my wife wrote in her letter, namely, that I was present when she had a discussion with Oksman about literature. Thus, it ended.

I asked for their names, which they gave me. I wrote them down on a scrap of paper. We all walked back to the ticket counter. My plane to Warsaw had left several hours before; later I heard how my friend, the heroic great Polish sociologist, Professor Ossowski, had waited for me, puzzled at my failure to arrive at the appointed time. I now wanted to get out of the Soviet Union as quickly as I could. A plane was leaving for Brussels in six minutes; I exchanged my Warsaw-Paris ticket at once. We all saluted each other, and I said: “We may meet again under other circumstances,” though I actually thought, “why should anyone wish to see this miserable land again,” and I understood why my great-great grandfather put my great grandfather, a boy, into a wagon of straw and hay that crossed the border into the Austro-Polish country.

On the Belgian plane, I asked the stewardess to please tell me when we crossed the Russian border and were out of the Soviet Union. A few hours

later she brought me the good news. When we arrived in Brussels, I went to the cable office and sent two messages, one to Kathryn's ship telling her and Robin that I was safe in Brussels. The second was to the American Embassy in Moscow. Years later our embassy friend visited us in Berkeley. He told how the Israeli Embassy had called them on the open telephone line saying that I had not been seen getting on the plane to Warsaw. So, the Soviet officials were apprised that the United States could not now be tricked concerning the disappearance of the exchange professor. Then during the next hours, they had wondered how to retrieve me from the hands of the Soviets. Fortunately, my telegram arrived.

A couple of weeks later an incident took place in the Soviet Union which had the earmarks of an act of warning against American scholars. Professor Frederick Barghoorn of Yale University was arrested on charges of espionage. He had been engaged in taking an unofficial public opinion poll among Soviet citizens on various political issues. Khrushchev said he would release Barghoorn if he had the personal assurances of President Kennedy that Barghoorn was not engaged in espionage. President Kennedy gave these assurances and Barghoorn was liberated. He had spent several uncomfortable days in a Soviet prison. The charges brought against him had obviously been fabricated.⁷

Julian Grigorievich Oksman was scolded and berated by the Soviet authorities. But they did not dare try him again. They referred to him in print, without naming him, as an "embittered old man"; they let him keep on working, though they deleted his name from printed public mention. My wife never ceased to sorrow that she had unwittingly added to the burden of the most courageous, brilliant Russian scholar she had met.

7 Frederick Barghoorn, a Yale historian, was detained at the Metropole Hotel in Moscow on October 29, 1963, and jailed for sixteen days until President Kennedy interfered in the affair and managed to convince Khrushchev to release Barghoorn under the threat that U.S. wheat sales to Russia may be jeopardized as a result (see *The New York Times*, November 26, 1991).

Robin Feuer Miller

Double Diaries and Layered Memories: Moscow, 1963 (a memoir)¹

In June of 1963 my mother, Kathryn Beliveau Feuer, found herself entangled in a series of events that were to change her life. Nearly thirty years later I too perceive that these events, despite their seeming insignificance and their supposedly non-cataclysmic resolution, have unhappily shaped my own experience as well. My mother, my father, and I were the lucky ones, the Americans who got away, returned home to the luminous sunlit air, sudden fogs, bookstores, and outdoor cafes of Berkeley, California. What of our Russian friends who stayed behind, whose encounter with the KGB was not brief, finite, dissectible? What of the main character, Julian Grigorievich Oksman?

Pechorin lamented that he was not the main character in his life, that he appeared in the final act of the drama of others' lives. Novelists make standard use of *deus ex machina*, of ficelles, of characters whose role is a "fifth business." Even David Copperfield wonders, in his opening sentence, if he will be the hero of his own life. He hoped that the subsequent pages, some five hundred of them, would show. But the answer remains equivocal.

Whatever suffering we endured, whatever crooked, clumsy scars remain, we were minor players, engines of circumstance and history. And I, a fifteen-year-old girl, a preoccupied, moody, boy-crazy teenager at the time, never even met Oksman. I remember only fragments – such as how my mother had told me that on one of her visits with him, when she had suggested they walk outside, he had angrily said, "why bother? Let them listen." At yet other times he said that the authorities would hurt him by withholding medicine

¹ Text prepared by Anna Kulagina. All annotations have been added by the editor. The Russian version was previously published in *Tynianovskii sbornik: Piatye Tynianovskie chteniia*, ed. Marietta Chudakova (Riga/Moskva, 1994), 357–366.

from his wife, or even by giving her harmful ones. My account is based solely on childhood memory – subject to vagaries, error, distortion – and not on scholarship or knowledge of this period.

My mother died on 1 March 1992. It is now June. Several colleagues and friends have urged me to describe my family's departure from the Soviet Union in June of 1963 after a semester spent in Moscow, so that one or more pieces of the mosaic of those times, however small, may not be lost. The prospect of writing about that time has both troubled, and, in a soothing way, distracted me. I am troubled by the recurrence of an old twinge I have long suppressed: there exists an unsettling discrepancy between affect and fact, between my nervous, angry, glaring emotions and what actually happened to us, which was, ultimately, despite the threats, nothing. Yet over three days I saw my mother unravel before my eyes. June 5, 6, and 7, 1963 became a watershed, one of the dividing lines in her life. A rutted, straight-lined road had slashed its way through a small country garden. The banality of the image invokes the reality of the event: a rape. A mother-daughter attempted rape, one psychic the other physical. One successful.

As for the "soothing, distracting" side: trying to write about something that occurred twenty-nine years ago, about which, disturbingly, though from good motives, you and your family rarely talked, inevitably raises questions about history and memory – questions of a general and therefore non-threatening nature. Therein lies the relief, the distraction from the emotions attending a loved one's recent death. Many of those who have written us letters since my mother's death have remembered her gentleness; others have repeatedly described her with a word not often used, especially in conjunction with a woman: grit. Taken together, these two words capture in part the oxymoronic riddle of her being. Both these aspects of her nature nourished me, sustained me. Even late in her life when she was incapacitated by illness, her gentleness, her grit, her fundamental honesty, her perfectly pitched and often lethal wit, continued to gleam through the muffling, frustrating cocoon of her physical frailty. I can see her reading these pages and honing in on everything false, overstated, or wickedly sentimental. She is gone, although I can hear the soft, low tones of her voice saying, "Hello, dear."

But what about those thoughts about history? The saying should not be, "the truth will out" it should be, "history will out," even if the truth itself re-

mains vague, obfuscated by the conflicting claims of human memory. When I decided to write this account, I searched out my school-girl diaries. My life lies recorded, day by day, from the age of nine until my first day in college. As a child, I imagined I wrote for posterity. I never look at these diaries now. They are too full of lies. The gap between present memory and past daily transcriptions disturbs me, to say nothing of the even more profound gaps between my father's memories and my own, discrepancies, despite our great closeness, about basic facts.

Yet a student of the literary endeavor, of the writings – fictional and non – of novelists, the perception of such gaps yawning within my own conscious life imbues me with a sense of validation: when a writer describes the same vital moment in, say, three letters, a diary account, a later reminiscence, and perhaps in a novel or short story or two, the fact that the accounts, even the supposedly non-fictional ones do not jibe, that key details – the richest, the most suggestive – in two accounts are missing from the third, somehow all adds up and is part of that heady mixture of truths and lies that constitutes a larger truth. As illustration you have here one essay written by a father and one by a daughter, each of whom kept diaries in 1963, each of whom remembers, but where, despite our good faith and our integrity, the equivalencies between our two accounts often exist only intermittently, and our present-day memories do not even always coincide with our diary accounts. And the central actors here, Oksman, my mother, and several KGB heavies, are not here to tell the tale at all.

In this spirit, with an acknowledgement of gaps, lacunae, but with an effort at essential truth, I shall try to describe that time.

On 5 February 1963 my father, Lewis S. Feuer, then a professor of philosophy and social science at the University of California at Berkeley, arrived in Moscow to give a series of lectures on Marx and Marxism as part of an academic exchange between the Soviet Union and the United States. I, then fifteen years old, accompanied him. After his first lecture, which quoted parts of Marx's own writings that contradicted Soviet dogma, all students were barred from the course and only members of the Academy of Sciences were allowed to attend. (I did too, until February 19, when I enrolled in Public School No. 56 in Moscow.)

I shift to my fifteen-year-old voice. My journal for 10 February reads, "I said something to daddy like, 'what's tomorrow, another day at the Institute?' and that has made him insist even more, as he has been saying for the past days, that I should go home." Then 11 February, "Went to the Institute again today. More arguments." 12 February reads, "Another day at the Academy," but the real focus of the entry is on some forgotten Yury I thought attractive (who, I think, later denounced my father in a Soviet newspaper). Another excerpt for 22 February, written after three days at School No. 56:

I must tell you the way the boys here flirt; they throw paper wads at me, draw funny pictures of me, and on the way home some Polish boys in my class threw snowballs at me. We had gym, and Lena and I fooled around with the volleyball. Later I offered them (Ina, Alla, Lena) some gum. Lena said she'd bring me some Russian sweets tomorrow. I was looking up the Russian word for "joke" in my dictionary. They were looking over my shoulder and saw the word "Jew." They started to giggle and asked me to pronounce the word for "that" in English. I asked why they were laughing, and they said the teacher was a Jew. Then I asked Lena if they didn't like Jews. She said no, they liked them very much, but some people didn't. I told her I was a Jew. She was surprised. Later she asked me to go to her house sometime soon.

The next day, 23 February, reads, "Today Lena gave me a little sort of doll. It is very sweet. In class one of the Polish boys, Spiczek, said that Russia had oppressed Poland. The class went into an uproar; kids were mad, the teacher wouldn't call on him." Then 6 March, "The Russian teacher was saying all sorts of things about capitalism in Europe. Their book is filled with pictures of factory boys being whipped. I began to hate her; I wanted to scream, thought up speeches to say as I rushed out of the room, but they would have been wasted. Lena insisted that Moscow was bigger than New York."

I have digressed, but I am trying to recapture the time, the place, the forgotten aroma of that life.

On 14 March my mother arrived. She had a grant to conduct research for her Columbia University dissertation on the genesis of *War and Peace*. She quickly became involved with scholars and intellectual dissidents. It was she

who managed to get Anna Akhmatova's *Requiem* to the west.² At the time I was completely unaware of this important venture of hers; in fact, I did not then even know of Akhmatova's poetry. Either through my mother's friendship with Gleb Petrovich Struve at the University of California or through her reputation as a scholar of Tolstoy, she had gained an introduction to Oksman. Moreover, she had already made a trip to the Soviet Union in 1956, and her article, "Russia's Young Intellectuals", which appeared in *Encounter* the following year, vividly describes her experience.³ But whatever the complexities of her intellectual pursuits were, for me, the effect of her arrival was simple, "the sun has come out in the sky and in me" (19 March). Nevertheless, about a week later we began to be annoyed by frequent mysterious phone calls.

If my mother was away, women would call for my father; if he was away, calls for my mother would come from men. Such occurrences troubled us intermittently, just enough to give an unpleasant, vaguely troubling edge to moments that would otherwise have been relaxed.

My mother and I planned to leave the Soviet Union via train from Moscow to Leningrad to Helsinki. My father was to leave a few days later by plane. Our troubles began in earnest on 3 June. We had gone for a farewell dinner to an Armenian restaurant with a family who was attached to the Israeli Embassy. Diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union, though shaky, still existed. Their daughter had become my close friend. After a festive meal we returned to their car to discover that the trunk lock had been delicately picked. A large suitcase of ours filled with winter clothes to give away had been stolen. We called the police who turned out to be completely uninterested in the theft; it had obviously been a planned job. We all regarded this theft as a harbinger of worse things to come. The utter indifference of the police confirmed this fear.

Moreover, during this period an acquaintance from the American Embassy who was willing to take risks on behalf of Russian dissidents and writers allowed my mother access to his diplomatic pouch (not the usual pouch

2 Sent via the diplomatic pouch from Moscow to Gleb Struve in Berkeley, Akhmatova's *Requiem* was first published at the end of the year from a typescript obtained from Oksman (Munich: *Tovarishchestvo zarubezhnykh pisatelei*, 1963).

3 Kathryn B. Feuer, "Russia's Young Intellectuals," *Encounter* 8/2 (February 1957), 10–25.

we all used which was subject to spot checks by the American Embassy in Helsinki).⁴ Earlier the embassy had reprimanded me because my friends back at Berkeley High School were sending me all the latest dirty jokes via that same pouch. "This is not what the pouch is for," I was told.

I think that during these very last days a letter, either that my mother was carrying for someone else or that she had written, was stolen from her purse. I remember only that my parents were in a state of extreme tension. The suitcase incident initiated our extreme sense of vulnerability, exposure, lack of safety.

My mother and I went to the train station to board the night train to Leningrad on the evening of 5 June. She had booked us a private compartment. We opened its door to find two men inside; one was small, dark, oily and spoke impeccable English; the other was some kind of army officer – very fat, a uniform covered in decorations, with a huge, rippling, bulbous, shiny bald head. Two typical bad guys, I realize now, right out of a grade B movie. My mother quickly began to protest, all to no avail, that there must be some mistake. They were overtly hostile to us and not even willing to leave the compartment so that we could undress for bed. Finally, pajama clad or not I do not know, we were all in bed, my mother on a lower berth, I above her, the oily man below, the fat officer above. The space between the two bunks was narrow. One had to stand sideways. It was dark.

I lay with my back pressed against the cold wall and closed my eyes. Suddenly I opened them, and there, in the dark staring at me the way I imagine a snake fixes its prey, was the fat army officer. His eyes literally gleamed in the darkness. In a single deliberate, rough gesture he swung his heavy bare arm across into my bed. I watched from some other zone of experience – silent, horrified, and amazed. His hand groped for my body, found my chest, and as I, already pressed into the wall, tried to lurch away, he began, as the *New York Times* obituary article (March 7, 1992) put it so delicately, to rough me up.⁵ Finally, I regained the workaday consciousness I had lost and cried out to my mother for help. The lights went on; a kind of four-way hysterical scuffle

4 Jack F. Matlock Jr.

5 Bruce Lambert, "Kathryn B. Feuer, 65, Russian Literature Scholar," *New York Times* (March 7, 1972).

ensued. I became aware that as my mother, weeping and shouting, was trying to defend me, she was also, somewhat ridiculously it seemed to me at the time, clutching her purse, which the oily man was trying, unsuccessfully, to grab. The rest of the night is a complete blank. I cannot remember how the incident ended, whether we all turned off the lights again and went back to sleep or whether I stayed down with my mother in her berth, while she glared angrily at the two men. I hope it was the latter.

The next morning, we arrived in Leningrad, went to our hotel, where, after breakfast we were arrested and taken to the police station. They informed us that we did not have the correct papers for travel to Leningrad and threatened to send us back to Moscow. (They did not carry out this threat; we remained in Leningrad.) We spent the greater part of the day in custody. Finally, we were released and returned to the hotel.

By this time my mother had begun a kind of collapse. She was trembling, shaking, weeping. I went into the bathroom with her (but perhaps this was after breakfast and before the arrest, I do not remember) and she took a paper from her purse, ripped it to shreds and flushed it down the toilet. Or could that have been in the police station itself? I think it was some abbreviated diary notes of her own, but I do not know. Nor did I ever have the heart to ask, for these events seared into her, altered her. I write about them as a woman older than she was at the time (she was thirty-six), but I understand them only as a child. I seem, as I try to understand this episode, this extended moment of three dreadful days, to be still arrested there, pinned like a live specimen to a board, alive but silent, my movements repetitive and energetic but unproductive of real activity or accomplishment.

Early on 7 June we boarded the train for Helsinki. Shortly before we reached the border of Finland, four men appeared and took my mother into the next compartment. I could hear the tones of her voice through the thin wall, arguing and pleading. The train stopped. I looked out into the corridor, and it suddenly seemed as though most of the car had been taken over by the KGB. There was a purposeful bustle going on; men closing doors, walking to and from. The minutes passed.

Finally, my mother came back, surrounded by the four men, one of whom had a gun pointed at us. She said, "Robin, get your things. We're getting off the train." "*Here, mother?*" We climbed down off the car, clambered over the

stony railroad bed and stood at gunpoint in a scrubby sort of field. The men took my address book. They surrounded us and told my mother that if she wouldn't sign the papers they wanted her to – a statement, I think, that she had had numerous visits with Oksman – that she and I would be arrested and would rot in a Soviet jail. She refused. We just stood there; the man with the gun seemed both foolish and frightening. His gun seemed awkward, a naked, clumsy embarrassment. People from the train were hanging out the window, staring at us, eating food, littering. Nearly an hour went by. The sun was hot.

We continued to stand surrounded by the men. Finally, one of them went into a nearby little hut of some kind. He must have made a phone call. He emerged, waved his arm angrily to the side, as if brushing away flies, and told us to get back on the train. Our ordeal had officially ended, but for my mother it had tragically just begun. Later, when she reported this occurrence to government officials, they surmised that the Soviets were just then looking to create an incident involving an American they could arrest. Indeed, shortly afterwards the KGB found a more palatable candidate for their distasteful purpose. Another American, Professor Frederick Barghoorn, was arrested in Moscow. I think he had been out walking when some men rushed up to him and thrust a parcel into his hands. Moments later he was arrested and charged with carrying secret plans for a hydrogen bomb. But our little group of KGB agents may have been scolded (even during the phone call from the hut) for thinking that a mother and daughter were good prospects for setting up this kind of incident. I apologize for reentering for a second time the cloak and dagger atmosphere of a grade B movie.

In the next hours and days, I watched as my mother began to chain smoke, an activity I had read of but never witnessed. But her hands were shaking so violently that she could not always get the cigarette to her mouth. On the night of 7 June, safe in Helsinki, a naïve and dramatic teenager wrote, "And all her life she's going to feel as though whatever happens to him will be her fault." Naïve and dramatic I may have been, but unhappily these words proved true.

Shortly afterward she told me, "I will punish myself by never publishing my book on *War and Peace*." Punish herself, dear, brave woman she did, and for what? For not signing their statement, for risking imprisonment for herself and her child, for having brought *Requiem* to the west? It was for that

single piece of paper taken from her handbag, which my father who later saw it described as an innocuous letter which only confirmed what they already knew in far greater detail, a letter which described merely that she had met a scholar working in her own field.

I quote now from a letter written to me eight days after my mother's death by Professor William Edgerton of Indiana University:

...I knew a good deal from conversations with Kathryn herself about that 1963 trip to Russia, but I learned still more from that *Times* account. In particular, I did not realize that you were with her on that trip. I have just gone back and read all of my correspondence with her that I can find, and I have come across a cryptic letter I wrote her after a trip to Moscow in 1964 to negotiate the following year's IUCTG exchanges:⁶ "I was told that our mutual friend's difficulties have now been cleared up, and was even told that there would be no harm in getting in touch with him. I questioned the advisability of that, in view of the strong possibility that his walls now had ears; and instead I sent word to him about my long conversations with you, as I had promised you I would. I had no chance to hear from him before I left, but I feel sure he received my message. I know you will be as pleased as I was to learn that he seems no longer to be in difficulty." That referred, as you will have immediately recognized, to Oksman. I believe you and Kathryn were in Moscow in the spring semester of 1963, weren't you? My wife Judy and I spent the fall semester there. As I remember, at that time Julian Grigorievich was in so much trouble that I dared not to visit him, and my old friend Ilja Samojlovich Zilbershtejn arranged for both of us to get together one evening in the Zilbershtejn apartment. That was when J. G. told me the distorted story he had been given – presumably during his interrogations by the security police – about Kathryn's difficulties.

Despite the entreaties of publishers and colleagues, she never published her book, *The Genesis of War and Peace*. She did, however, publish many marvelous and keenly original essays on the Russian Novel as well as a large number

6 Inter-University Committee on Travel Grants.

of reviews. In 1976 she edited and wrote the introduction to *Solzhenitsyn: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall) which she dedicated to Oksman. I close by citing her dedication:

To the memory
Of
JULIAN GRIGOR'EVICH OKSMAN (1894–1970)
eminent Russian literary scholar,
survivor of ten years in Soviet labor camps
and further years of exile,
who, like Solzhenitsyn, after his “rehabilitation”
chose the courageous course of thinking,
living, and writing as a free man,
and who then, like Solzhenitsyn,
expelled from the Union of Soviet Writers
and thus deprived of the means of earning his living,
refused to recant
but rather continued his work
for the freedom of Russia and of Russian literature,
work which will endure
when the names of his persecutors
are buried by history – or by infamy

Michael Scammell

***Index on Censorship* and the Publication of Tamizdat in the 1970s¹**

This is not going to be an academic paper, but rather a set of discursive impressions that will be largely anecdotal. The idea is to put some flesh on the bones of words “samizdat” and “tamizdat” and to describe some of the cogs and wheels that go into play to transform one into the other. I should add that the kind of tamizdat I am going to discuss is that which is translated into English, so it does not necessarily apply to tamizdat in other languages. *Tam*, in this case, means England and refers to what my colleagues and I translated and published in our magazine, *Index on Censorship*.

The first thing I’d like to say is that the case of *Index* is unique, because the magazine was itself a product of the samizdat-tamizdat nexus. The original inspiration for *Index* was a message from two prominent Soviet dissidents: Pavel Litvinov, grandson of the former Soviet Minister Maksim Litvinov, and Larisa Bogoraz, former wife of the writer Yuly Daniel’. In 1968, they wrote to the *London Times* calling for international condemnation of the trial of two young writers and their typists on charges of anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda.² One of the writers was Aleksandr Ginzburg, the other, Yury Galanskov. Galanskov died tragically in a camp some three years later.³ Meanwhile, the English poet and former co-editor of *Encounter*, Stephen Spender, organized and published a telegram of support for Pavel and Larisa’s appeal. Sixteen well-known British and international public intel-

1 Transcript prepared by Anna Kulagina and edited by the author. All annotations have been added by the editor.

2 Larisa Bogoraz and Pavel Litvinov, “Appeal to World Public Opinion,” *The Times*, January 13, 1968.

3 Galanskov died in a labor camp in Mordovia at the age of thirty-three on November 4, 1972.

lectuals expressed their support. I will not name them all, but they included W. H. Auden, A. J. Ayer, Yehudi Menuhin, J. B. Priestley, Paul Scofield, Henry Moore, Bertrand Russell, and Igor Stravinsky.⁴

In reply, Litvinov suggested starting some form of organization “to provide information to the world public opinion about the real state of affairs in the USSR,” by which he meant the ongoing censorship, and the trials and imprisonment of Soviet writers and intellectuals. Litvinov also stipulated, and this is important, that this new organization be politically impartial and draw attention to similar abuses in right-wing dictatorships as well. I quote: “This committee should not have an anti-communist or anti-Soviet character. It would also be good if it contains people who are persuaded in their own countries of pro-communist or independent views, as for example in Greece. The point is not that this or that ideology is incorrect, but that force not be used to demonstrate its correctness.”⁵

Spender and his British group of intellectuals and artists collected enough money to found a nonprofit organization called Writers and Scholars International and advertised for someone to run it. I applied and was hired as the director. I was also told that it was my job to put Pavel’s letter into effect in whatever way I chose. It turned out I was better prepared than I realized at the time. I was a freelance translator with a wife and three children to support and failing to keep up with the cost of living, despite having translated famous authors like Nabokov, Tolstoy, and Dostoevsky.

Being a translator was already very helpful, but my latest translation from Russian was particularly important. It was *My Testimony* by Anatoly Marchenko, and the book created a sensation in England and America, partly because its author was not an intellectual, but a working man, albeit a very intelligent one, but also because Marchenko gave us the first extended account of life in a Soviet labor camp after Stalin. That is, he described life as

4 Their telegram in support of Litvinov and Bogoraz, which was written the day after the “Appeal” had appeared in London, read as follows: “We, a group of friends representing no organization, support your statement, admire your courage, think of you and will help in any way possible” (Stephen Spender, “With Concern for Those Not Free,” *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 1 (March 1972), 13).

5 Quoted in Michael Scammell, “How *Index on Censorship* Started,” *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 10, No. 6 (December 1981), 6.

it was being lived at that very moment. Both my translation and the Russian original were published in 1969, a year after Pavel's letter.⁶ It prompted a wave of publicity about the Soviet judicial system and its human rights violations and it affected me personally very deeply. I already knew of the Soviet situation intellectually, but Marchenko's book brought it home to me with its immediacy and documentary reality.

Litvinov also described the trial of Andrei Siniavsky and Yuly Daniel', Larisa Bogoraz's former husband. I had been to Moscow shortly before the trial and had met Siniavsky and Daniel' before they were arrested. Their trial reinforced the immediacy of Marchenko's book. On top of that, Marchenko had a long chapter of his book devoted to Yuly Daniel', who was in the same camp as he was, and in his preface, had echoed Litvinov's plea: "I'd like this evidence of mine concerning the Soviet camps and prisons for political prisoners to come to the attention of humanists and progressive people of other countries, those who also stick up for political prisoners in Greece, Portugal, Spain and Africa."⁷ So far as I know (and Pavel can confirm this, or not), Litvinov's and Marchenko's appeals were made independently of one another, but they both showed how important political neutrality was to them and how current the idea was in dissident circles. The reason, I think (and maybe Pavel can clarify this too), was their desire to forestall the KGB and Soviet authorities from branding the dissidents as stooges of the CIA or simply pawns in the Cold War.

I should add that in his letter Litvinov also referred to another persecuted dissident, Vladimir Bukovsky, whose first trial Litvinov had attended and taken notes on. After several stints in jail, labor camps, and an insane asylum, as we know, Bukovsky was deported to England and wrote his own memoir, *To Build a Castle*, which I also translated, though this came later.⁸ It was not published under *Index's* auspices, but I did the translation while editing *Index* and thus completed the circle first begun by Litvinov.

6 Anatolii Marchenko, *Moi pokazaniia* (Paris: La Presse Libre, 1969); Anatoly Marchenko, *My Testimony*, trans. Michael Scammell, with an introduction by Max Hayward (New York: Dutton, 1969).

7 Marchenko, *My Testimony*, 3.

8 Vladimir Bukovsky, *To Build a Castle: My Life as a Dissenter*, trans. Michael Scammell (New York: Viking, 1978).

But let me get back to *Index* itself. I had no prepared program, very little money, and few resources to fall back on. I knew that whatever we undertook would have to be cheap and able to be carried out by one or two people at most. There was no internet in those days, of course, and I decided that given my own interests, the simplest and best way to realize our mission would be to start some sort of a publication. I managed to overlook the fact that a publication meant printing costs, paper costs, distribution costs, not to speak of the cost of collecting information, translating and editing it. But we raised just enough money to make a start.

Let me be clear that I didn't do this work on my own. A network of human rights and academic specialists on Russia already existed and already created great interest in Soviet repressions and the resulting dissident movement. In England, some of the experts were stationed at the London School of Economics and one of them, Peter Reddaway, was on the board of *Index*. Others were based at the School of Slavonic Studies and still others at the BBC World Service, where I too had worked for a while. The World Service was particularly important to us, because its programs covered virtually the entire world. Amnesty International was vitally important too. Its international Secretary, Martin Ennals, was on the board of *Index* and the Amnesty staff schooled me in the philosophy of human rights.

The task that faced me now was to find a unifying theme for our work. From the start we were dealing with countries from different parts of the world, with different histories and governments and ideologies, and while it was clear we needed to be politically impartial and concentrate on some form of human rights, it seemed pointless to copy Amnesty. In my youth I had been a journalist for a while, which pointed me toward freedom of expression, and I decided that researching and writing about censorship would offer a kind of shorthand for examining the suppression of human rights. First of all, freedom of expression was precondition for any kind of democratic regime, and secondly its opposite, censorship, seemed to be a universal problem.

Having made that decision, I was able to start the magazine, and here is a copy of our first issue. It has two prose poems by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (taken from samizdat), fourteen poems by Natalia Gorbanevskaya, a poem by George Seferis, a censored Greek writer, a short story by Milovan Djilas, a

Yugoslav politician who was in disgrace, Amalrik's final plea at his trial, texts on Portugal and Bangladesh, and a letter from George Mangakis, a famous figure in Greece. A later issue was largely devoted to statements by Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov, including various letters each of them had written, and later issues contain Pavel's account of the dissident movement and a letter he sent us. As you see, we never lost sight of Soviet repressions, but we tried to preserve political balance, as this issue, with major stories from the USSR and South Africa, demonstrates.

You can also see from the magazine's contents that besides covering social and political issues, I tried to go beyond them and introduce literature into the magazine. This was mainly because writers were so often the target of censorship, so we had poems by Solzhenitsyn, Gorbanevskaya, and Seferis in our first issue and spent a lot of time looking for more until literary works began to flow in of their own accord. There was a second reason for printing them that Stephen Spender touched on in his essay in the first issue: "Obviously, there is a risk of a magazine of this kind becoming a bulletin of frustration. However, the material by writers censored in Eastern Europe, Greece, South Africa, and other countries is among the most exciting that is being written today."⁹ He was right, and we ended up publishing a large number of famous writers from South America, Asia, and other parts of the world, as well as the Soviet bloc.

Not long after the magazine was established, Joseph Brodsky was allowed – or forced – to go abroad. He came to London before moving on to the United States and I happened to be the first person to interview him in the West. This was made possible not only by my knowledge of Soviet and dissident literature, but because he was being shepherded around London by Spender and W. H. Auden, his hosts, both of them associated with *Index*. As Joseph and I sat in my tiny one-room office for the interview, I kept linking him to the dissidents and to their political movement, but Joseph insisted on steering clear of politics. He wouldn't answer any question that had the word "dissident" in it and insisted on talking about poetry. I didn't know Joseph well enough then to understand that this was typical of his attitude to poetry.

9 Stephen Spender, "With Concern for Those Not Free," *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 1 (March 1972), 13.

I was misled by the fact that he had allowed some of his work to circulate in samizdat in the Soviet Union and while living there had given poems to others to bring to the West for publication in tamizdat.¹⁰

Famous writers like Brodsky, Solzhenitsyn and others definitely added weight to *Index*, but just as important were lesser-known writers of merit who deserved a hearing, and all other writers without qualification who were not allowed to publish in their home countries. I should add, from my point of view as an editor, that a diversity of voices, especially writers' voices, yielded interest of a different sort. Literature of any description, including work that has been suppressed by censorship, provides entertainment, and if we wish to make an impact on the public, it's essential our magazine be circulated, bought, and above all read.

I have concentrated on the beginning of *Index* today and won't even try to describe the totality of our work (suffice it to say I edited the quarterly magazine for eight years at a rate of about 100 pages per issue, and it's still going strong nearly fifty years later). But I would like to mention two associated initiatives that *Index* was involved in to illustrate the ways collaboration between samizdat and tamizdat worked. The first concerns the Polish samizdat magazine *Zapis*, the first, I think, and one of the best to be published in both samizdat and tamizdat. After publishing a large feature on the Polish *Black Book*,¹¹ we were approached by the exiled Polish dissident Eugene Smolar on the subject of *Zapis* (which means "record" or "transcript" in Polish). *Zapis*, the first serious example of samizdat to appear in Poland, was heavily influenced by Soviet dissident practices and was being published under the auspices of the unofficial Workers' Defense Committee. Soon after, Smolar passed on a message from Adam Michnik, co-editor of *Zapis* (Michnik's partner was Stanislaw Baranczak) that copies of the magazine produced locally in Poland were virtually unreadable and Michnik asked if someone in London might be able to publish the magazine there, so long as it was a

10 By 1972, two editions of Brodsky's poetry had been published in tamizdat: *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, with a foreword by Georgy Stukov (Washington DC: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1965), and *Ostanovka v pustyne* (New York: Izdatel'stvo imeni Chekhova, 1970).

11 Maria Hirszowicz, "Poland's 'Black Book,'" *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 7 (July 1978), 28–34.

non-Polish organization. I am not sure if this is because there were disputes and disagreements among the various Polish groups abroad, or whether, like Pavel Litvinov in his letter, Michnik wanted the publisher to be seen as impartial. Moreover, if the publisher was a British organization, it would carry more weight and be easier to defend.

Smolar was working for the BBC Polish Service at the time (his brother, Alexander, was head of the service) and well placed to help us if we agreed to go ahead. We said yes, and with Smolar's help published twenty-one issues of *Zapis* and four books in Polish that appeared separately. At the same time, we contacted Irena Grudzinska's group and Barbara Torunczyk's new literary magazine in Paris for additional help and information. Frivolously, I gained extra pleasure from the circumstance that though *Zapis* didn't exactly rhyme with *Index*, the two titles had their stress on the first syllable and somehow sounded alike.

Lastly, I'd like to mention a parallel to samizdat/tamizdat that *Index* was involved in and wasn't investigated until very recently: the display of unofficial art from the Soviet Union. In 1976, I was introduced to Aleksandr Glezer, an amateur collector of unofficial Soviet art, who had amassed a large collection of banned paintings he managed to smuggle out to the West. The status of this art was akin to samizdat. It couldn't be officially exhibited and could only be seen clandestinely. Glezer explained how paintings and sculptures had been regularly banned and even physically destroyed in Russia, notably at an exhibition on a vacant Moscow block where many works were destroyed by bulldozers.¹² This was censorship with a vengeance, and though several nonconformist Soviet artists had been allowed to leave and had exhibited their work in Paris, he, Glezer, had come to see if someone in London would hold an exhibition too. As it happened, one of our board members was Sir Roland Penrose, founder and director of the Institute of Contemporary Art in London, and he was definitely interested. I was also friends with the dissident art historian and critic Igor' Golomshtok, and he agreed to curate an exhibition together with Glezer. In January 1977, the exhibition, *Unofficial Art from the Soviet Union*, opened at the Institute of Contemporary Art, the

12 The so-called Bulldozer Exhibition took place in the outskirts of Moscow on September 15, 1974.

largest exhibit of unofficial Soviet art in the West thus far. The English critics were all there, the artists who now lived in Paris were there, and Henry Moore invited the artists to spend a day at his permanent sculpture display north of London. For us at *Index* it was a step outside our usual circle of subjects and generated huge interest in the Soviet dissident movement in general.

One issue I have not tackled here, which could be the subject of another conference, is what did it mean for samizdat from the USSR to appear in the West? What was the impact on the Soviet government and what did it mean for the creators of samizdat? And for us at *Index*, what difference did it make that Soviet samizdat appeared alongside samizdat (not called that, of course) from South America, Asia, Africa, and in Europe, countries such as Greece, Portugal, and Spain? We were generalists, not specialists. We didn't go as deep into the various dissident movements as specialists did. On the other hand, we placed samizdat and tamizdat in a global context and that gained us a different and broader audience.

Pavel Litvinov

Political and Human Rights Tamizdat¹

To start, I would like to mention two of my friends I met back in Moscow: Andrei Amalrik, at the time a well-known historian who had spent several years in exile for being a so-called social parasite, because he did not have an official job, although he worked very hard on his writing; and Karel van het Reve, a Dutch journalist who came to Russia for a year as a foreign correspondent of a Dutch newspaper. The three of us became close friends. We all had different experiences, but Karel was a westerner and really knew the western world. Much of what we understood about what was going on in the West came from him. So when I wrote the letter that Michael was just talking about, Amalrik and I gave it to Karel van het Reve. It was 1968, nine days before I was arrested on the Red Square, and four days before the Soviets invaded Czechoslovakia.² I said, “Karel, you know, I’m probably seeing you for the last time for many years, because you are now leaving for Holland, and I will go to a labor camp very soon.” I did not know for what, or how, but it was clear I would be arrested. “What should I do?” he asked. “Why don’t we think about getting some connections, so that our work doesn’t vanish.” The idea to send letters to westerners came from him. That was what brought about *Index on Censorship*, Michael’s magazine, as well as our relationships with Amnesty International and the Writers and Scholars International. (Of course, I only learned about Michael’s magazine several years later, because at the time I was in exile in Siberia. When I returned to Moscow, I met a

1 Transcript prepared by Alexander Okun. All annotations have been added by the editor.

2 Litvinov’s letter to Stephen Spender was written on August 8, 1968. It was published in *Index on Censorship*, Vol. 4 (March 1975), 8–10. The Warsaw Pact invaded Czechoslovakia on August 20, 1968. The demonstration on Red Square by seven dissidents, including Litvinov, took place on August 25, 1968.

young man who told me, “Pavel, do you know you gave me a job?” I said, “No, I don’t think I ever gave a job to anybody.” That was Michael Scammell, whose talk you just heard.)

Our letter was addressed to a wide range of people, but it was received by the poet Stephen Spender, who organized support for me and Larisa Bogoraz. Spender was a driving force behind all these publications. I just wanted to mention those remarkable people. Since then, Amalrik wrote several remarkable books. His most famous and, basically, prophetic one is called *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?*³ If you look at it today, you will see how many of the global features that arose after the fall of the Soviet Union he had actually foreseen.

In 1974, I had to emigrate from the Soviet Union and came to the United States. I was a professor of physics, but could not find a teaching position at a university here, so I started teaching at a high school for a living. For thirteen years, I taught physics and mathematics at a private school in the US. But most of my time was devoted to publishing tamizdat. That’s what I did. Tamizdat was my life. It was tamizdat of a special type – texts in defense of human rights. It is important, because the real, literary tamizdat, such as the poetry of Brodsky, the novels of Solzhenitsyn or Nabokov, could not be distributed without the people who read them in those countries – in Russia, in Greece, anywhere they had originally come from. To survive, those books needed readership. To distribute them, the publishers and authors of samizdat and tamizdat had to have some protection, and that protection came from the human rights movement, whose foundation was, in turn, provided by political and human rights sam- and tamizdat.

I was one of the first political *samizdatchiks*, but I had several predecessors: Frida Vigdorova, a Russian writer and journalist who made her name by attending the trial of Joseph Brodsky, sentenced to five years for so-called social parasitism, because he wrote poetry and did not make any money. Despite being harassed by the judge, Vigdorova wrote down everything that was taking place in that courtroom, and her record, her transcript of Brodsky’s trial, was published – not in Russia, of course, but in the West. It was broad-

3 Andrei Amalrik, *Prosushchestvuet li Sovetskii Soiuz do 1984 goda?* (Amsterdam: Alexander Herzen Foundation, 1969).

cast by Voice of America and the BBC back to Russia and became the first human rights tamizdat.⁴ It was very simple and clear, and relatively short: forty pages or so.

After that, a mutual friend of mine and Vigdorova's, Aleksandr Ginzburg, prepared a collection of documents called *The White Book on the Trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel*, two writers who were arrested for publishing their books abroad, for being *tamizdatchiks*. I also participated in *The White Book*. It included articles from the western press that mentioned the trial. Alik Ginzburg received a big bag of these clippings and gave them to me. I distributed them among my friends, and we translated them into Russian. Alik included them in his book. *The White Book* was the next milestone in political sam- and tamizdat.⁵

Alik Ginzburg, along with Yuri Galanskov and others, including even Vera Lashkova, one of the typists, were arrested. And then I published a book called *The Trial of the Four*.⁶ This is what it looked like. It was published in Holland by Karl van het Reve, who had by then founded the publishing house Alexander Herzen Foundation. Another book I published abroad was devoted to the trial of Vladimir Bukovsky.⁷ It was also a collection of articles and documents about Bukovsky's affair. That was my contribution to the early stages of political tamizdat.

4 Vigdorova's transcript was first published in the Polish émigré journal *Kultura* 7–8 (1964) in Paris. It appeared in an abridged form in German in *Die Zeit* (June 26 and July 3, 1964). The Russian text – in a reverse translation from the German – was published in *Russkaia Mysl'* (August 11 and 13, 1964), before it was finally printed in full in the almanac *Vozdushnye puti* 4 (1964) in New York.

5 *Belaia kniga po delu A. Siniavskogo i Iu. Danielia*, ed. Aleksandr Ginzburg (Frankfurt: Posev, 1967).

6 *Protsess chetyrekh. Sbornik po delu Galanskova, Ginzburga, Dobrovol'skogo i Lashkovo*, ed. with a commentary by Pavel Litvinov (Amsterdam: Alexander Herzen Foundation, 1971).

7 *Pravosudie ili rasprava? Delo o demonstratsii na Pushkinskoi ploshchadi 22 ianvaria 1967 goda*, ed. Pavel Litvinov (London: Overseas Publications Interchange, 1969). The demonstration on Pushkin Square in Moscow on January 22, 1967, was organized by Vladimir Bukovsky to protest the persecution of Ginzburg, Galanskov, and Lashkova. As a result, Bukovsky was sentenced to three years in prison.

Of course, all these words – tamizdat, samizdat – deserve definitions. We know what samizdat is: it is something that was circulated without the blessing of the official publishing authorities in Russia, or in Poland, or wherever dictatorship existed. The word comes from a joke by the poet Nikolai Glazkov, whom I met right before he died: he published small numbers of copies of his own poetry, which he called *samsebiaizdat* (“myself – by myself – publishing”). But *samsebiaizdat* was somehow too long, and people abbreviated it, so it became *samizdat*. Tamizdat appeared as a second-generation joke: when samizdat reaches the West, it becomes tamizdat. What is *tam*? *Tam* means “there.” But what is “there,” when you are over there yourself? It is “here,” that is, in the West. These are just the origins of these words. I don’t think we need to argue about them too much.

But of course the meaning of these words deepens as we talk. It depends on who utters these words, and where: they do not have objective characteristics but are relative instead. If I am speaking from over here, tamizdat is just a book, something that is published here, can be discussed in a lecture or at a conference, nothing else; it is just a book translated from the Russian, Polish or Greek and published in this country, for example, in English; or maybe published in Russian and smuggled back into Russia, or into Ukraine, and so on. But really, it is not tamizdat. Because tamizdat in Russia meant something very valuable, very interesting, and very dangerous. Samizdat was of poor quality: it was hand-typed or handwritten, a kind of internal thing. But if it was tamizdat, it meant you were part of a conspiracy or a group in charge of this book being smuggled, perhaps with the involvement of the CIA, a group of dangerous spies. So it was some kind of special thing.

Anyway, when I came to this country, I became a *tamizdatchik*. But what kind of a *tamizdatchik* did I become? I joined my friend, who had already emigrated before me, Valery Chalidze. Actually, he did not emigrate but came to the US with the official, legal permission to give a series of lectures in New York and Washington. He gave talks about the human rights. Then, three weeks or so later, when he was in New York, there was a knock on the door at his hotel room. He opened and saw two Soviet officials. One of them was a consul, or some other Soviet diplomat, who said, “Gospodin Chalidze, why don’t you give us your passport, we want to check it.” Chalidze gave them his passport, and the man put it in his pocket. Then he took out an

official looking document and said, "Gospodin Chalidze, you are stripped of your Soviet citizenship because you committed anti-Soviet propaganda," or something like that, meaning that he had "behaved in a way unbecoming of a Soviet citizen." After that, Chalidze stayed in the United States and started publishing tamizdat. It was political tamizdat, that is, human rights tamizdat. His publishing house was called Khronika Press. In its early stages, he was joined by two people: Ed Kline and Peter Reddaway. They began publishing a magazine called *Chronicle of Human Rights in the USSR*.

Let me explain the complicated story with all these "chronicles." They published many books, probably a hundred or more. After I was forced to emigrate, I joined their magazine. It appeared for many years, both in Russian and in English. Chalidze was the driving force and, basically, wrote most of the magazine himself, but I helped him. Ed Klein translated the texts into English and wrote original English texts. Why was it called *Chronicle of Human Rights in the USSR*? To explain the title, I have to step back to Russia again. Soon after I finished those two books about the Bukovsky affair and the demonstration on Pushkin Square in Moscow, it became clear that violations of human rights in Russia were too numerous: people were arrested, expelled from the Party, expelled from their jobs, and put into mental hospitals because of their political activity. And so to write a separate book about each of these cases was both impossible and impractical, a waste of time. Instead, we came up with the idea that we should collect the relevant sources and turn them into a periodical publication, which would just document everything that was happening in the labor camps and in mental hospitals throughout the Soviet Union. This magazine in Russia was started by Natalia Gorbanevskaya with my help. She published it in samizdat. It was called the *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii* (*Chronicle of Current Events*). There were sixty-seven issues of that magazine published intermittently: sometimes monthly, sometimes less often; sometimes there was a break of several years. The *Chronicle* continued through the collapse of the Soviet Union. All of its editors sooner or later went to prison or to a mental hospital, but it continued, nevertheless. Right before I left Russia, it was put on pause, because most of the editors had been arrested. There were threats that if anybody dared to resume publishing the *Chronicle*, even those who were not directly involved in its publication would be arrested as well. It was pure hostage tactics, pure

blackmail, and my friends Tanya Velikanova, Sergei Kovalev and others decided to temporarily stop the magazine. When I came to the United States, I said that the magazine would start again, except it would be published from over here. In the meantime, during that pause, we started the other chronicle, the *Chronicle of Human Rights in the USSR*. This is how and why two *Chronicles* coexisted: when the first one stopped, the second would appear.

I see I have confused everyone, but both magazines were important not only because they were accurate, but also because they were apolitical: neither of them criticized the Soviet ideology or even discussed the political opinions expressed by the political prisoners in Russia. Basically, it was a publication about political persecution of people who spoke their minds, no matter whether they were on the left or right. It was about religious people, about pacifists, about communists, socialists, anti-communists – practically everyone, occasionally even fascists. Everyone was defended, because in the name of the human rights, everybody was *supposed* to be defended. If anyone speaks up, they have the right to speak up. That was the publication in which I participated for many years, or rather, all my life in the United States, until the Soviet Union stopped existing. I still continue to work for human rights in Russia and am interested in human rights in other countries as well.

However, it was not only a magazine but also a publishing house. Ed Kline, our American founder who raised the first funds, was a businessman and a mathematician. He knew how to raise money and even contributed his own money at first. He was an activist in Amnesty International too, among other things. He became interested in Russian literature while studying at Yale, where he started to read Russian literature and fell in love with Russian culture. He was friends with the English professor and translator Max Hayward, who told him about the old, first-wave émigré publishing house Izdatel'stvo imeni Chekhova, which had, in its own time, brought out at least a hundred very interesting books. But the publishing house had no money, no one wanted to support it, and Ed simply bought the name of this press and started to publish. He published several excellent books, including books by both Soviet authors and émigré ones: Nadezhda Mandelshtam, Anatoly Yakobson, and many others. Chalidze's Khronika Press, which published Sakharov and other important dissident figures from the USSR, was affiliated with Chekhov Publishing House: some titles were published by Chekhov,

others by Khronika. Together, we published about a hundred books, mainly in Russian.

Most of these books originated in Russia. Some of them came from the labor camps. How did information from the labor camps reach us? About twenty-five blocks north of here, on 92nd Street, there was an apartment, where Khronika Press was based: there was a small IBM computer, which was slow and very often broke down. Several people sat there in a small office, about one-tenth the size of this room. These people were the ones who received the information. Sometimes it was just a small piece of paper, sometimes a letter, sometimes a telephone call. We gathered all the information about what was happening in the camps. Sometimes it would come in a way I would describe euphemistically: we received information smuggled out of the camps in the internal organs of prisoners or their spouses, so the things we printed were often smelly, typed in very small print, and of very bad quality; they had to be opened very carefully before being read and transcribed. There was a young girl, a Russian émigré named Lena Stein, probably in the eleventh grade at Jersey City High School, who would do all this work before it appeared in the *Chronicle of Human Rights in the USSR*. That's how the information about people's sufferings in the labor camps reached us in New York. It would appear in tamizdat and was often broadcast back into Russia via Voice of America, Radio Liberty, and the BBC. People would learn about it, the information would circulate. It had a complicated life, and I just wanted to give you some idea about what it was, and how important it was.

Human rights as a movement is not dead. The Soviet Union is dead, Communism is dead, but now we have an American president who does not respect human rights, which means that the problem persists.⁸ Samizdat and tamizdat were necessary not only as literature, but as a defense of human rights.

8 The talk was delivered in December 2018, in the middle of Donald J. Trump's presidency.

Ellendea Proffer Teasley

How Censorship Leads to Tamizdat: Ardis Publishers¹

This is not going to be a typical keynote lecture; it will be more of a conversation. But the things I will talk about here I have thought about deeply. I am going to talk about censorship, and not just in the Soviet Union, because I feel when we are too concentrated on the Soviet Union, we forget that there was a larger context, that there *is* a larger context. Then I am going to talk about Ardis. The most important part for me will be your questions. If you don't ask questions, you don't get very much out of me. That is when the most interesting things happen, in my experience.

I've had to think about censorship all my life, for obvious reasons. Why Ardis Publishers began, why it continued, why we were banned from the Soviet Union – all these questions have to do with censorship. But long before Russia, Carl and I were interested in censorship in America. Russians always want to hear about the Russian side of Ardis, but the English side of Ardis was of course important for us, since we were not Russian ourselves, and wanted to propagandize Russian literature in our country. Half our titles were in Russian, half in English, and in this way, Ardis was unique in the world.

* * *

Freedom of speech is guaranteed by our constitution, but it is in lots of constitutions. Stalin also had a constitution. A constitution, of course, is worth nothing without law and an independent judiciary. A big aspect of American law is common law, and it has to be worked out in every generation. Right now, student protestors would probably not let Milo Yiannopoulos speak on

¹ Transcript prepared by Elizaveta Baholdina and edited by the author. All annotations have been added by the editor.

this campus.² From the point of view of someone like myself or Carl Proffer, this is a mistake, because we believed in complete freedom of speech. As long as you were not calling for violence, bringing down the government or involving children, we did not think there should be any rules. Because the question is always: who makes these rules?

As scholars of Soviet literature, we know that censorship is like a river that keeps shifting. You have to fight to keep those banks back in place, to fight for or against censorship every year, every generation. Sometimes things go well, sometimes they don't. There is action, there is reaction. But in a land of law, there is ultimately something that none of my Soviet friends ever had: recourse. In America, the freedom of speech is backed up, because previous generations of those seemingly boring people we call lawyers have guaranteed it for us.

Now, with the concept of political correctness (which I am all for emotionally, but completely against intellectually), we have a challenge. Because you either have freedom of speech, or you don't. If you have it, the people whom you despise also get to speak. If Putin comes here tomorrow, he gets to speak – if somebody invites him. And stopping people like him from speaking is truly un-American.

I have had a long history with censorship. I came of age at the time of the Vietnam War, when military censorship was justified to conceal everything being done to my cousins who fought in that war.

What I often see now on our campuses is a new form of censorship that is flourishing.

Last spring, I spoke at Harvard and Duke about my Brodsky book,³ and I got off on a censorship theme because I was thinking about similarities between the Soviet Union and today's China. Developments in China make me think that flourishing civilizations look different from each other, but devolution looks the same.

2 Milo Yiannopoulos (b. 1984) is a British far-right political commentator and public speaker whose speaking engagements in the UK, the US, and Australia have sparked controversy and protests, especially on university campuses.

3 Ellendea Proffer Teasley, *Brodsky Among Us. A Memoir*. Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2017. Viktor Golyshev's Russian translation of the book was published two years earlier: Ellendea Proffer Teasley, *Brodskii sredi nas*. Moskva: Corpus, 2015.

Devolution thinks like this: these people are ungovernable, we have to control them, and we have to control them by any means necessary. We will propagandize them, and in China we will start checking their internet connections, their cell phones, and we will do something close to mind control.

When China was rising, statistics were so bad that it was like the Soviet Union in the 1930s: everybody was telling their boss the numbers the boss wanted to hear. When the Soviet demographers wanted to know something approaching its true demographics, it resorted to Murray Feshbach's publications from the Census Bureau of America.⁴ The responsible Soviet officials had lied, because they had to fulfill certain plans, and they had to conceal certain losses (such as millions of people missing after Great Terror.)

You cannot run a country without decent statistics. Censorship in this area immediately destroys your ability to plan for the future. When you introduce fear into the system, which Stalin did, which Mao did, which Xi is doing now, then you really get distorted statistics. Corruption is never far behind in this scenario. Even now, businessmen sometimes have to go to China and count the factories themselves, because they cannot trust the Chinese counts. Nor can the Chinese government correctly implement its budget, because it does not know how many people it really has. There are, it appears, concealed populations.

The Soviet Union's mania for control, in my opinion, developed because it was essentially an unstable structure. Unstable structures want more control, because they feel everything can fall apart any moment. Well, what is the price for this? You censor books, for one thing, and people sense they are not getting the enjoyment or information they need.

But books aside, let's talk about everyday life consequences of censorship. You censor everything, you get to say that black is white, you get to say there's enough bread, oil, gas, whatever, and that it will last for twenty years, and everybody agrees. But the result is you lose contact with your people and do not know what is on their minds. They are saying what you want them to say, they are writing what you want them to write, but people are still thinking what *they* want to think.

4 Murray Feshbach (1929–2019) was an American demographer and long-time head of the branch of the Census Bureau that specialized in the Soviet Union and Russia.

When I met the dissident Anatoly Marchenko, it was my most interesting meeting in a life full of meeting remarkable Russians. He was a true working-class hero, out of prison briefly at the time of our meeting, and then sent back into the camps. He was still there under Gorbachev. (Everybody thinks when Gorbachev arrived, everyone was freed, but it was more complicated than that.) Marchenko's acceptance of his fate was the act of a free man. It is as if he said you cannot do anything to me that you have not already done. All you can do is kill me. Which is what happened in the end.⁵ Marchenko learned the facts about his own country when he was a young prisoner, and he learned them from the other prisoners. No censorship in those conversations.

But to return to last spring, when I gave a speech at Duke about censorship and Brodsky. Afterwards, people came up to talk to me. One of them was a Chinese graduate student in linguistics. He came up and said, "You know, my teacher said I had to come to this talk for an outside credit, and I am so glad I did." He was mainland Chinese and stayed with me for half an hour, but he could not talk to me about what he wanted to talk to me about. What he wanted to talk to me about was what I had just said about China's unreliable statistics and censorship. Instead, he just stayed beside me as I talked to other people. Then I realized he was afraid he was being watched.

Mainland Chinese students here are not free. They are monitored. The Confucius Society on each campus keeps tabs on all their students and knows the minute they start saying something, writing something, or doing something. Now the censorship we observed in the Soviet Union is happening here in our own country, with a different group of people. These students have family at home who serve as hostages. There are many ways in which the Chinese government functions very much like the Soviet Union did.

* * *

When Carl and I went to Russia in '69, which was Carl's second trip, but my first, we met amazing people, mostly historians, writers, and painters. We were enraged by what we saw: these people could not travel abroad, they

5 Anatoly Marchenko died at Chistopol Prison on December 8, 1986, after a four-month-long hunger strike in which he demanded the release of political prisoners.

could not get the books they needed, could not get access to research from other countries. They had to run risks to get this information through foreigners or wait years for a book to reach them some other way. This seemed barbarous, because the books they needed were not even political books (that would have been understandable). No, these were simply novels, stories, plays and works of research.

Censorship is often stupid and tends to be applied massively. It has its own nature, and its nature is to expand like cancer.

* * *

After we got back from trips to Russia in 1970–71, Carl decided to print some poetry by hand. He called a local printer, who said, “You want an IBM composer, and, by the way, it can print any language, they have a little ball.” (This is called “cold type,” which I’m not going to go into.)⁶ It was a revolution for small publishers. We had three books we wanted to print. One was the very rare *Kamen’ (Stone)* by Mandelshtam, of which there were only fifty copies left in the entire Soviet Union, including the world of book collectors. (We knew a book collector who gave us one copy.) I had a rare version of Bulgakov’s play *Zoikina kvartira (Zoya’s Apartment)*. And Carl had his dream project: *Russian Literature Triquarterly* (which for Russians is not very interesting, because it was in English). It was a thick journal under the influence of Pushkin. The first issue had Akhmatova and Bulgakov on the cover, and inside there was the first publication of Brodsky’s poem “Penie bez muzyki” (“Song without Music”) with the parallel Russian text. There was always a Russian section in the journal, but the Soviet censors did not know that, because the section was called “Teksty i dokumenty” (“Texts and Documents”), and it was buried in the back. For example, we had been sent three very rare letters of Zamiatin, of whom at the time almost nothing was known, which we published in that section. The journal had articles, translations, and photographs. Soviet Russian photographs had been retouched out of recognizability so that the writers did not look like themselves, so I began to collect the real photographs, which is how I ended up doing the Bulgakov, Tsvetaeva and Nabokov

6 Cold type, usually done on an IBM Composer, is a typesetting method that does not use movable type. The final product is then photo-offset.

photo-biographies, and many others. We were not yet publishers; we had just published these three books. They were delivered to our tiny townhouse in Ann Arbor where they filled up the garage.

When we went back to Russia on our next trip, we told our friends, “Well, we’ve got 1,500 copies of Mandelshtam’s *Kamen’*, and it’s going to get to you one way or another.” We sent Mandelshtam’s book everywhere we could; libraries and graduate students bought it. (One American scholar even used it as a bribe to obtain documents in the Soviet archives.)

The Soviet historical and literary archives, by the way, deserve a special mention in this discussion of the dangers of censorship. Let’s look at this in a wider perspective. The French archives of the Vichy years were closed for almost thirty years, until an American graduate student named Robert Paxton decided to write about the history of France under the Vichy regime. He was denied access to the archives, so he did a really interesting thing: he went to the German archives of the occupation of France. It turned out, of course, that great numbers of people in France were denouncing each other, just as they had done in Austria. This appears to be human nature, and it happens the minute there is a tyrannical regime ready to respond to denunciations. (The Soviet Union was no exception. As Dovlatov said, “Yes, Stalin killed millions of people, but who was it that wrote those three million denunciations?”)⁷ Once Paxton published his study of Vichy France based on the documents from the German archives,⁸ the French historians were very slowly allowed to start working on this material themselves.

Paxton was a new and necessary outsider, just as Robert Conquest was, just as we were. When a culture shuts down – and severe censorship means that a culture is shutting down – the system still needs information, doesn’t it? What happens is that the job is taken over by outsiders. Paxton did it for the French, and we have a brilliant example in our field in the person of Conquest, who wrote the main book on the Stalinist terror without ever

7 Cf.: “We endlessly rail against Comrade Stalin – and, of course, with reason. All the same, I would like to ask – who wrote four million denunciations at the time of the Stalinist terror?” (Sergei Dovlatov, *The Zone: A Prison Guard’s Notes*, trans. Anne Frydman, ed. Katherine Dovlatov. London: Oneworld Classics, 2011, 79).

8 Robert O. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940-1944*. New York: Knopf, 1972.

going to Russia. That work still stands up pretty well, as does his book on the Ukrainian famine.

Now I will come back to Ardis Publishers. We did not have a master plan and only very gradually became a publishing house. After we published Mandelshtam's *Kamen'*, and many other books, both in English (Dostoevsky, Bulgakov, etc.) and Russian (Brodsky, Nabokov, etc.), we arrived at a crucial moment. The dissident Lev Kopelev wanted us to publish his memoirs, which included descriptions of the behavior of the Soviet soldiers as they invaded Germany. This was not really our sort of book. Ardis was generally very literary in its profile, politics were not our interest, since other Western publishers took care of that. But Kopelev was our friend, so we published his book.⁹

There was a world that needed to have these books exist somewhere, a closed world that needed information, and we had no doubt that the books we were publishing provided certain kinds of new information.

You may ask, "How is Bitov's *Pushkinskii dom* (*Pushkin House*) information? How is Iskander's *Sandro iz Chegema* (*Sandro of Chegem*) information?" Well, let me give you a parallel that would have probably never occurred to most of you.

I am a compulsive reader, I read a lot of strange things. For example, I just reread Ulysses S. Grant's memoirs. He was a terrible student at West Point, strong in only two areas: he was brilliant at math and was a true horse whisperer. He describes how he would go to the library when he was supposed to be in class, and he would read every novel he could find, especially by Bulwer-Lytton. Yes, "It was a dark and stormy night" – that was Bulwer-Lytton, a writer we make fun of now. What Bulwer-Lytton provided Grant was a picture of upper-class England – the social life, the manners, what a man of honor did and did not do. Ulysses S. Grant came from a very poor family that could give him no information about such things. He read these books to find out about life.

Similarly, if you read *Sandro iz Chegema* or Sokolov's *Shkola dlia durakov* (*A School for Fools*), you encounter a life you are never going to know about

9 Lev Kopelev, *Khranit' vechno*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1975. (Published in English as *To Be Preserved Forever*.)

otherwise. And, of course, fiction can tell you some things that nonfiction cannot.

When we met with Iskander and Bitov in the mid-1970s at a friend's apartment in Moscow, they had written their major works, *Sandro of Chegem* and *Pushkin House*. We did not know Bitov or Iskander well, but their friends knew us. Because their novels were not passed by the censors, parts of their texts were published in the Soviet Union as short stories. As a result, important works by two of the most famous Soviet writers were mutilated.

Why did these authors not publish with the legendary Paris émigré press YMCA, you may also ask? After all, Ardis was neither the biggest nor the best publishing house. YMCA did vastly more. They published Solzhenitsyn in enormous editions, a world beyond what we could do. Posev in Germany published many Russian titles as well. These publishing houses published political and religious works, but they also brought out some books of real literary merit.

Ardis was very literary and generally avoided politics, and that was what set us apart. Knowing the dangers for our authors, we had made a decision from the beginning to take no money from the CIA in any form we could recognize. Because we did not take any money from anybody, nobody could tell us what to publish and what not to publish.

Bitov was a very cautious man (by the way, *svetlaia pamiat'*, may he rest in peace – he died very recently). Normally, Andrei would have never published abroad, I think, but when you have written a major work that is never going to come out as it was written in your country, that work becomes more important in some ways than your life. That is what you were meant to write, and you wrote it – so you wanted it published as you had conceived it.

In short, censorship sent two stars of Soviet literature to publish at Ardis in Michigan, even though they were still widely published in Russia, and risked a certain amount by publishing with us. These authors discussed us with everybody in Moscow and Leningrad. The question was: could we be trusted? We never published a single book without a signed contract. The idea of publishing without permission, from our point of view, was out of the question, because these authors could go to jail for it. And we ourselves had to have the protection of our law. But we resolved to never show these contracts. In the end, they decided we could be trusted.

I read *Sandro* and said, yes, we should do it. (This was while we were still in Moscow.) Carl read *Pushkin House* and said, yes, we should do it. These were big books. We did not think much about the fact that they were never going to make money. (The only book that made money was Kopelev's memoirs, because the world rights were sold. There were a couple of titles like that, which would pay for other books and everything else, which included paying staff, printers, postage, and our mortgage.)

Interestingly, the Russian writers considered us "safe" because we were not Russian, not Slavic, not Jewish. (Why did it matter that we were not Jewish? I have given it a lot of thought. Maybe because they thought that if you were Jewish, you may have secret Slavic blood and be a double agent. I don't know...) What mattered was that we were all-American Americans.

Once a well-known author told me, "Ellendea, I want to publish with you," and when I asked why, he said, "Because I get all these letters from my publisher with stuff like 'Christ is Risen' printed at the top. You know, I'm an atheist, I cannot stand this attitude. And their letters are full of religious references." He was talking about YMCA. As for Posev, writers suspected it was at least partially subsidized by the CIA, so it was not their first choice.

The CIA, it turned out, published *Doctor Zhivago*, the collected works of Pasternak, and ran all kinds of different projects, such as Inter-Language Literary Associates. My attitude to that was that it was a good use of our tax money. I am all for it – but we would never do it ourselves.

We tried very hard to protect our authors. And, of course, we also wanted to keep on going to the Soviet Union. This is how the authorities always got you, and this is how the Chinese get their scholars in the West too. If you go too far, you do not get a visa to go back and see your friends again. This was a constant threat.

So why did the Soviets let us get away with everything for as long as they did? Well, this is one part of Ardis that the Russian audience has no interest in and does not understand. It had to do with our English books. Whom did we translate? We published translations of Pushkin, Dostoevsky, and all the usual suspects, but we also published translations of Trifonov, Nagibin, Soloukhin, Shukshin, etc. That is, what was current, orthodox, Soviet Russian literature. The Soviet authorities valued it greatly as, perhaps, a kind of propaganda, though that was not at all our intent.

This gave us an insurance of sorts. One of our friends' father worked in some suspicious tower in Moscow. He did not like his daughter's friendship with us, and said: "You know, the Proffers are a complex phenomenon" ("Профферы – это сложное явление"). He was quoting someone at the top.

The KGB followed us and they interrogated our friends. Some of our friends went to jail partly for possessing underground literature as well as our books. This was all "normal" life. But they never interrogated us. This was our life up until 1979.

In 1979 Aksenov and Erofeev put together the almanac *Metropol*, which was not passed by the censor. They offered it to us, and we could not say no to this first attempt by well-known writers to demonstrate that the censors had no right to stop the publication of what was actually a purely literary collection.

We were aware that this might lead to a disaster for everybody. Akse-
nov told us that the writers would have a breakfast at the Metropol Hotel to announce that they were publishing the almanac abroad with Ardis. Correspondents were invited.

One of the writers in the almanac promised he would call or send a telegram to us if these plans changed. At the last minute the breakfast announcement was called off, but we never received a call or telegram telling us. (Possibly, that person was drinking that night; we still don't know what happened.)

In any case, Carl Proffer went on the Voice of America and said we were publishing this anthology. That was the last straw for the Soviet authorities. There were consequences for many: two much older writers left the Writers' Union and lost their medical care; some writers lost their jobs; even parents were punished. Carl was banned and would never see Russia again.

In 1980 they banned me as well, and that was the end of our visits (although manuscripts were still smuggled out and letters received), until 1987 and the Moscow International Book Fair. The 1987 book fair was a revelation in comparison to the first one we attended in 1977.

Until that first fair in 1977 we had not met our regular readers. We had seen our writers and the Moscow-Leningrad intellectuals, but we had never met the people who took Nabokov's *Dar* (*The Gift*) and copied it by hand and typed it on carbon paper and sent it around the country. The readers we met

at the 1977 fair told us one book would have about 300 readers, maybe more. The book hunger was extreme because there was so little good to read.

Again, I think of China. I do not know if you have heard of the novel *Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress* by Dai Sijie? It takes place during Mao's Cultural Revolution. Young, intellectual kids have been sent to do hard labor in a harsh mountain area with a very cruel headman. They are allowed no books. But somebody has sneaked in a book, and the character starts reading Balzac in translation, and then he tells everybody else the plot. He reads Balzac in Chinese translation, of course, and he says, "This is what they've kept from us, they've kept all of it from us. This is what life is like in the real world." This is one of the powers of literature – to let you experience lives you can't have, as General Grant might have said.

The readers we met at that 1977 book fair were from all over the country. They stood for hours to get into our tiny booth, which was the size of this table. The intellectuals would go straight to Nabokov and try to read all of *Drugie berega* (*Other Shores*, the Russian version of *Speak, Memory*) while standing right there in front of us. We could not let them do that, because there were two-hour lines and more people needed to come in.

There were others in line who looked like poor peasants, or like the children of peasants. They were waiting to get into our booth without knowing who we were or what we did, they just figured that if there was a line, there was something to see. The book they fought over was in English – it had a photograph of Esenin on the cover. This was Gordon McVay's biography of Esenin, which had numerous photos, including some never printed in the Soviet Union.¹⁰ He was their poet – someone who understood them. I cannot tell you why watching this was so moving, but it was.

It was transformative to meet these unknown readers who said, "You have no idea, you just have no idea, what these books mean." And we did not, because we had only seen Moscow and Leningrad.

Carl died in 1984, after an unexpected and terrible battle with cancer, so he never got to see the beginnings of freedom in the Soviet Union. By the 1989 book fair, it felt like we had entered a free country, other than the fact that I was held at customs because I was still on the blacklist. I was worried, because

10 Gordon McVay, *Esenin: A Life*. Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1976.

my eleven-year-old daughter had already gone through the barriers before me. They did not release me until one of the Ardis editors, Ross Teasley, came to find me and lied to the officer holding me, saying that the *Washington Post* was waiting to interview me. The officer made a final call and then let me go.

At that same fair in 1989, Ron Meyer and I were arranging books at our stand when two KGB officers who “specialized in literature” appeared at the booth and led us away to a special room. (Their names were Zareev and Panov. I think Zareev was a colonel. I don’t remember the details, but Russian friends knew who they were.) They were very unpleasant. They said, “You have published Iskander’s novel without his permission.” I said, “I do not do anything without permission.” Then I got mad, because they were very threatening and they were yelling, “Yes you did!”

I said, “You know, it’s nice to deal with Gorbachev’s people, but I don’t want to deal with Brezhnev’s people.” They were startled by my tone and the very idea and said, “We’re not Brezhnev’s people!” And then they shut down. They saw I was absolutely certain I had a signed contract, and they began to be afraid that Iskander might have lied to them.

In the 1990s, I was on the first Booker Russian Novel Prize panel, Russia was actually free – dangerous, but free. And then, in 2015, when I wrote my memoir about Brodsky, *Brodsky Among Us* (which was immediately translated from my manuscript), I got to meet the young Russians. I had not seen much of the young generation until then. They came out in force for my book tours in 2015 and 2017.

Many of their questions were about censorship now versus the 1970s. Since the main Russian television channels are all state-controlled, they feel the bad old days have begun again. And it is not just about Putin. Because what happens with censorship is that people start doing what they think the boss wants, then they go further than even the boss would go.

I had to tell them, no, it was worse in the Soviet era – which was a surprise to many of them. Their parents are not really telling them what they lived through, or maybe they have forgotten, or somehow idealized it. I am not sure what the reason is.

As always, Russia gave me incredible gifts, and my meetings with these young people were profoundly interesting to both sides. I was very grateful.

Thank you. I will stop here and take your questions.

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